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THE WAIFS OF FIGHTING ROCKS.

By CAPTAIN CHARLES McILVAINE.

COMPLETE.

JANUARY, 1895

LIPPINCOTT'S

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

LIPPINCOTT'S, CONTENTS No. 325.

THE WAIFS OF FIGHTING ROCKS	*Captain Charles McIlvaine*	1–79
The Ducks of the Chesapeake	*Calvin Dill Wilson*	80
"Mrs. Santa Claus"	*Marjorie Richardson*	87
The Yule Charm (Poem)	*M. S. Paden*	95
Christmas Customs and Superstitions	*Elizabeth Ferguson Seat*	96
Yesterday (Quatrain)	*Alice Brown*	101
Mrs. Risley's Christmas Dinner	*Ella Higginson*	102
Empress Josephine's Happy Day	*Edith Duff*	104
With the Autocrat	*F. M. B.*	107
A Question of Responsibility	*Imogen Clark*	110
On Christes Day (Poem)	*Susie M. Best*	116
Herbert Beerbohm Tree	*Gilbert Parker*	117
A Prodigal Friend	*S. Elgar Benet*	122
To the New Year (Poem)	*Kathleen R. Wheeler*	126
By Telephone	*Francis C. Regal*	126
New Year's Days in Old New York	*Edgar Fawcett*	136
Socialist Novels	*M. Kaufmann*	138

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THE WAIFS

OF

FIGHTING ROCKS.

BY

CAPTAIN CHARLES McILVAINE,

AUTHOR OF

"A LEGEND OF POLECAT HOLLOW," "THE GHOST OF AARON'S PRONG,"
"POWERFUL TEMPERANCE," ETC.

35

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MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1895.

THE WAIFS OF FIGHTING ROCKS.

CHAPTER I.

IT was no idle fancy that gave Fighting Rocks their name. If ever there were rocks pugilistically inclined and giving evidence of many a hard-fought battle, those glaring at each other across Big Head Fork were the fighting phenomena. Even the bouncing, whirling, foaming Fork, jolly and sparkling as ever mountain torrent was, was compromised by contact with them, and foully slandered as one having a disposition to be all sorts of a belligerent under the comprehensive title of Big Head. Away back in the Carboniferous era of rock-making, Fighting Rocks had been cradled as snugly together as ever rocks were, to be covered by superimposed strata when the time came for it. What they fought about, and why they allowed a gossiping, teasing stream to come between them, are items lost from the stony records of their after-time. The only possible clue to the trouble lies in the immense veins of bituminous coal they once held in common, but now hold in greedy grips—just as they snapped them asunder—for seasons to crumble and men to peck at. They tower above Big Head Fork with angry faces, twisted, bloated, scratched, torn, patched with mosses, bandaged with creepers, poulticed with leaves and loam, spotted with swallows' nests, their gouged eyes deep in cave sockets, their brows scowling and wrinkled with crease and furrow; huge pines bristling with the wrath of centuries, and hemlocks prickly with scraggy anger, quiver and shake from forehead to crown and hiss at one another across the ravine, when storms are high and passions raging. Dark and forbidding they stand, leaning slightly over the stream (brave to run between such foes), hurling thundering echoes across, dropping huge boulders to crush each other's protruding feet, until the space between them looks like a battle-ground piled with stone weapons and strewn with gigantic lances, whose shafts were the mighty forest trees now rotting in their midst. So the rocks were known to the mountaineers as Fighting Rocks, and just above them on Big Head Fork, where even the jolly little stream

grumbles at the intruding stones and blusters at the narrow trail worming its way across, is Fighting Rock Ford. Where the trail comes from, or whither it goes, is lost in the mystery of the divides and ravines that gutter and pierce the inexhaustible covering of fresh clean air on the vast regions of West Virginia's mountain-ranges. Seeing, as Fighting Rocks have seen for ages from the corners of their eyes, the meek little meadow lying close across the Ford, scared into trembles by their racket and roar, they might have stayed their battle to let Peace settle on the lovely spot for gentle nursing of their calmer echoes. But the meadow, with its paw-paw groves and maple clusters, its point of clear and broader rise of orchard, had always been the scene of jar and discord; so it, too, inherited a pugnacious name in Fighting Point. Here in the olden times rival Indian tribes had met and fought, and left their darts and bones for dashing rainfalls to lay bare upon its surface. Later, land-surveyors used their Jacob-staffs and smashed their compasses in settling lines and points of law that neither compasses nor courts could find solution of in any less combative way. Broken heads and broken vows had been the heritage of every couple squatting in its lonely cabin; until, at last, the very logs had parted, the doors divorced their hinges, and every clapboard of the contentious roof was slapping at its neighbor.

Notwithstanding its brawling record and name amenable to question, Hedge Harner had long had his brown eyes set in longing at two objects resting upon the uttermost horizon of, to him, all things delectable: one was Maggie Byrne, commonly called Peggy, and the other was Fighting Point, as a place to put her after he had secured brief of title to her in the form of a marriage certificate.

Fighting Rock Point being held as a belonging by eight legally parchmented holders, Hedge Harner conceived the mathematical idea that he could score one more point in the law for himself by subtracting their claims from the number proverbially assigned to possession.

Therefore, one Sunday morning, he stuck a piece of bacon on a peg, washed his shirt in Big Head Fork, and hung it up in the tumble-down cabin to dry, as all-sufficient notice to intruders, however authorized, that he there had his board and washing to establish residence beyond a doubt, even should the eight litigious owners unite to put him out; which was beyond any human probability suggesting itself to his experience. The robins and orioles, in total disregard of Sunday obligations, were busy arranging matrimonial affairs and attending to housekeeping matters, among the pink-clad and scented apple boughs. Cardinal grosbeaks, swelling in the pride of their scarlet uniforms, were filling the air with bombastic song to their mates in Quaker garb; tomtits poked their tack-like beaks into vine crannies and bark nooks, bobbing their velvety heads and twittering jerky love; tiny warblers, subdued in dress as the first of autumn trees, peered and pecked between the cabin's open ribs, and theirs were the only eyes that saw Hedge Harner stretched in the latticed sunlight on the equally latticed floor, waiting for his shirt to dry, that he might climb the point at Fighting Rocks and over the divide to Poplar Branch, where Peggy dwelt.

As Hedge lay stretched upon the rotten floor, his thoughts were

crowded, notched, and jumbled, like the sticks in the open wickered and daubed chimney at which he stared in lazy contentment. "I reckon I'll git her. I'll hev to patch this shanty up a bit, though: them logs is kinder openish. The chimbley's leaky ez a corn-basket; but the ole roof'll let the smoke out. I'll ax Peggy, anyway. She can't say no more nor no, no time. Geewuts! I wish I had her done axed, an' it done over. Ef she says 'No,' I'll take down the bacon an' light out. No, derned if I will! Ef I git her axed the wust of the job's done. Hit's kind uv home-feelin' yere, so yere I'll stay. 'Tain't every feller thet hez a kiver, ez the tortle said to the crow pickin' at him, an' telled him he'd best scrimmage round fer soft victuals. The floor'll do, I reckon, till winter comes ag'in. Hit's kinder floppy an' upsettin' fer cheers,—thet's so!—an' onragler fer a grub table, but I kin splice the legs till they touches somethin'."

Hedge laughed a merry, hearty laugh, as he continued, "We kin take turn about holdin' it up while we're eatin'. I'll hev to fix up a place fer the bed, er we'll git dumped. I reckon Peg'll git a right spell, an' cut a right caper, ef I ax her to live yere at Fightin' P'int. Womcn git sich crosswise notions in the'r heads, ez the kingfisher said to the catfish when he couldn't git him swallered fer his stickers. People'll put her up to a sight uv contrariness 'bout it. I'll hev no fightin' whar I am; 'tain't mannerly; an' it's wuss nor seesawin' on a sharp rail, jawin' back'ard an' forrid an' sassin'. I'll be good to her, an' smoothin'. Peggy's kinder briery chance times. She sets nigher an' steadier than she use' ter: ther's not ez much jumpin' an' lookin' uppish when I tech her, sparkin'-like. T'other night when I said, 'Peg, what are you settin' so fur off fer?' an' she said, ''Tain't my fault, Hedge,' lookin' smilin' an' cutersome, she wuz kinder takin' to it nateral-like, like pigs does to taters. She didn't hunch none when I moved up 'longside uv her. Thet's the time to ax her,—when she's cutersome an' smilin'. Ther's nothin' ez skittish ez a girl thet hain't hobbled with keerin' fer a feller. Peggy's hobbled, an' it's me thet's the hobbler. (That sun's movin' in yere, right where I'm layin'.) I tell you, Peg," he exclaimed, aloud, as he brought his fist down emphatically upon the floor, "I keer fer you till I git hetted up ez hot ez that sun is, an' a kind uv mis'ry thet's wuss than the fever. Hit's bubble an' bust, like mush a-b'ilin'. Geewuts! hit's comin' on now." Hedge turned over uneasily out of the sun's way. One of the wide oaken floor boards bent, cracked, gave way with a bang under his weight, then left him doubled up V-shaped, with feet and head doing salutation on a sudden and unexpected meeting.

"Geewuts!" he exclaimed, "hit's a blessin' ther's no cellar. I'd 'a' dropped like a bar through a bar-trap. I'm kinder jubious 'bout how Peg ud take to stickin' this way, ef she chanced to git dropped: she might git riled. I done reckon I'll hev to patch this yere floor up a bit."

It was with no little trouble that Hedge squirmed out of the predicament he was in. When he once more got his feet in their proper place, and had assured himself by much rubbing that he had whole skin and ribs left, he stood looking thoughtfully at the black gap in the floor.

"That were a suddin bend in the path, ez the old woman said when she walked inter the well. I'll hev to jim aroun' an' fix this place up. It hain't goin' to do with Peggy, to be too forrid in axin' her. Ef I want to git her to come to Fightin' P'int an' live 'long with me, I'd best sidle up to her cunnin'-like, like catchin' a hoss with a nubbin uv corn. Women is easy cotched, but they don't take kind to halterin'. Peggy'll think an all-fired sight more uv me ef I lead her to my home by the top-knot, with her eyes unkivered, an' kin show her a good stall. I'll j'ine workin' in arnest, an' fix up the ole place so she won't nigh stick her feet up through the roof, an' set lookin' at 'em, with nothin' under her 'cept slivers an' a hole, like I done just now. I'll j'ine fixin' the ole place in arnest. It'll take right smart titivation. I'll mend the fences, an' plant a crop an' tend it, an' plant some ingins an' taters, an' some posies, an' chance times I kin rive out some clapboards fer roofin' the cabin, an' wet days I kin hammer 'em on. I'll rid the ole place up so it'll be decent fer to stall a woman in, an' purty an' scrumptious. Geewuts! what a time I'll hev keepin' my mouth shet 'bout who's the girl I'm doin' it fer! Hit 'll make Peg cur'ous, an' j'alous, an' them's good sparkin' signs. When I gits it done done, I kin tell her it's fer her, an' I'll hev some backin', an' somethin' to show fer it. I kinder 'spicion it'll help me to git a scald on the right words fer to ax her in. I kin take her some ingins uv my own raisin'; an' taters uv my own growin'; an'—ha! ha!—an ear uv corn uv my own tendin' to coax her to my own home with. I'll git to work; it'll be workin' fer Peggy an' grub."

What a fertilizer love is! It had never occurred to Hedge Harner, before he went through the cabin floor, that what was good enough for him was not good enough for any other body; that there was any other way of disposing of life than "gittin' 'long somehow," that "gittin' j'ined" involved more than "takin' a feller" by the woman, and "gittin' a dough-baker" by the man, and having licensed "sparkin'" as long as "no fightin' an' corn an' taters lasted." But now Hedge Harner looked as though a new growth had started in him. It flushed his face with happy purpose; it sprung his well-knit form from careless laziness to the erectness of determined action; it prompted him to plunge his head and arms into his half-dried shirt, and to thank its rents that he was not smothered before getting out of it; to wash his sun-browned face; to finger-comb the sparkling water of the spring through his curly hair, until it matted together in cleanly glossiness; and then to start, with his half-brimmed hat stuck bravely on his head, across Big Head Fork, up the tangled trail surmounting Fighting Rocks, and away across the spur to the cabin of his sworn friend and fearless defender, Granny Lovett, that he might tell her of the new sap coursing his veins, and the buds of expectancy it was fostering. What a fertilizer love is!

Hedge Harner's life was a one-chaptered history. Even the preface was lost, and the introduction missing. Twenty-two years before this his squatting on Fighting Rock Point, he was found poked in the sleeve of a soldier's coat, having nothing about it to mark the ownership excepting the quality of the cloth and the stamp upon its cuff-

buttons; these told that it once belonged to a Federal officer of cavalry. Just enough of him was sticking out of one end of it for him to get air for instinctive yelling, and at the other to show that the sleeve was his only garment and inheritance.

It so happened that this mite of a castaway was sowing his yells by the wayside, and that they were growing with remarkable vigor upon the fertile soil of practice, when Jude Lovett, full-faced and red, was breasting her way through the dense fog bedding itself in the narrow valley of Lower Big Head; breasting it ahead of her with rounded prow calicoed to the solidity and shape of a Dutch lugger. Every mother sense in her took cognizance of the cries. "Great nations!" she ejaculated, with such explosive astonishment that even the heavy mist propping itself against the mountain-side failed to hold it back from echo,—"great nations! I b'lieve thar's another un. One las' night, an' one this mornin'. Poor little creeter! it must be a throw-away."

She hurried along the stony pathway, with the compassion holding divine birthright in womankind driving every muscle, until she got eye-knowledge of a real presence. There, in the midst of a wild-sumach-, brier-, thorn-, and vine-woven hedge, lay the curious human chrysalis, struggling to escape its woollen shield.

"Poor leetle creeter!" she crooned, as she cuddled the encased baby and swung it from side to side, after the manner of shaking a jug, to mix comfort with trouble. "Whose kin be you, I wunner?"

The long list of apprentice mothers and likely amateurs, unrolling itself by the force of shrewd study in Jude Lovett's mind, was not complimentary to the morals of Big Head Fork region, as she ticked them off with negative shake of her head or bob of possibility. "Poor leetle creeter! Here you air squallin' an' kickin', an' young Susie Harner's leetle un is layin' dead back yander in the cabin, an' her a-frettin' over it bein' born that-a-way. Ther's babies allus a-comin' an' allus a-goin'. Like's not the good Lord hez sent you fer a comfort fer her. I'll take you back to her, anyway, an' lay you 'longside uv her. Maybe she'll take a notion to you. Ef I had your own mean-sperited mother here, I'd chuck her in the briers whar I found you, an' I'd set on her till she repinted. But, poor gal, maybe she's frettin' too —who knows? Maybe she's frettin' an' needin' comfortin': jest like ez not. I'll carry you 'long home with me, an' take good keer uv you till you grow up. One more won't make no difference in my cabin. The good Lord said, 'Suffer leetle children to come unto me,' an' he's showed a power uv marcy to me that-a-way. But you'd hev a welcome, an' all you could eat an' drink. Poor leetle throw-away! no fayther, nor mother, nor nothin'. But I'm thinkin' you'll do Susie a power uv good. Maybe she'll pick at you at fust, fer you're jist like a chickin hatched on the hearth; no hen'll own you. Ef she don't took to you right, I'll took keer uv you right. I'll took keer uv you. Thar now! stop cryin'. Ther' ain't nary a mansion but one in my house, but I'll be a fayther to you (near's I kin), an' you'll be another un the good Lord hez allowed me."

The fog had hardly settled in Jude Lovett's wake before she had

turned back on the path and was breasting it again to Ben Harner's cabin, filled with good intent, and her kind heart fortified by baby outworks.

Jude Lovett was a mother by divine inscription. Every line of her figure was overspread with the signs of it. The well-combed crinkles of her hair were such as babies love to rumple; her rounded features, full of kindness and fun, were resting-places for babies' eyes; the soft creases of her chin and neck were playing-grounds for tiny hands; her broad lap was upholstered for habitual bouncing; her feet were round as cradle-rockers; and her cushioned arms were bent with the baby crook. Small as was the rectangular pen of logs in which she lived, it was a mammoth play-house, with peep-holes between the logs, hiding-places behind drapery of hanging skirts and under nests of beds, parallel bars in quilting-frames swung from the low rafters, jumpers on the springy floor-boards, swings wherever bough-hook or catchable bundle was within reach, flat-irons for soldiers, chairs for forts, dogs for horses, cats for whirligigs, kittens for sub-babies, the chimney-corners for a nursery, charitable mud-holes outside furnishing the necessities of child-life in all things, especially pie-supply. White-headed youngsters (graduated to the suspended skirts), bearing the blue-eyed, round-faced, sturdy-limbed, curly-haired trade-mark of the Lovetts, were duplicated in age by black-, brown-, and gray-eyed companions of all angles and crooks, of both legalized and unrecorded paternity. For Jude Lovett was never contented except when she had a baby of her own to bring up, supplemented by some waif, stray, or orphan to receive her overflow of motherly love and care. When the baby supply was limited, she sought consolation in being mother by proxy to any incoming infant arriving at droughty periods; and therefore, as years rounded her up with flesh and experience, she shared the name of "Jude" with "Granny" until she was best known among the generation she especially mothered as Granny Lovett. In this latter character she had spent the night at Ben Harner's cabin, and thither she was now hurrying with her armful of comfort, to lay it beside his young wife, Susie, and so filled with fervor and thankfulness to her good Lord for making seeming restitution of a living baby for a dead one that she entirely forgot her own motherly cupidity.

In the cabin the little throw-away was welcomed with brightened eyes, faint flush of joy, and smile of eagerness to clasp something with life and warmth where death had laid but icy disappointment.

"Just look what I've fetched you, Susie," Granny gasped, as she pulled the baby out of the coat-sleeve, after the manner of uncasing a pillow. "The good Lord meaned him fer you. Hit's the Prodigal's return to—his mammy, ez the good Book says. Ther' wuz weepin', an' wailin', an crackin' your teeth, Rache—Susie frettin' fer her fust un, an' wouldn't take nothin' to eat nor comfortin'. An' now yere's a baby, fallin' frum goodness knows whar (heaven, I mean), alive an' kickin' in a hedgerow, like Moses in the bulrushes, an' nobody knows whither he come frum er whither he's goin' to. I 'spicion he's hungry ez a leetle pig, an' him roarin' like a lion seekin' somethin' to eat. Yere he is, Susie; ez fine, healthy-a-lookin' a young un ez ever wuz borned.

I'd 'a' took him hum myself, but I done look upon it ez the Lord's marcy to you-uns, an' a sign fer me thet I hev enough, sendin' him this-a-way to you an' Ben. A fool fer luck, ez Solomon sez, an' a poor man fer babies. Now, don't him an' her look purty, Ben? Look, Ben!"

Granny Lovett was right. It *was* a pretty sight. All the time she was quoting Scripture after her own peculiar ideas of what it ought to be to suit the circumstances, she was busy nestling the child beside the wondering and delighted Susie, who turned lovingly to lay her arms about it. Ben Harner sat down on the bedside to smooth the hair of his wife, as she looked up to him pleadingly for permission to keep it. He answered her look with the kind words, "Whatever you say, Susie, I'm agreed to. Hit don't 'pear to me it ud be doin' the Christian thing to turn sich a leetle thing frum our door."

"Then I'll keep it, Ben. I kin hev it to call mine, anyway. I'm mighty glad. It feels so good to me." She smiled again in a little while, as she said, "We'll call him Hedgerow,—Hedgerow Harner; 'cause that's where Granny finded him,—in a hedgerow."

"Hit's a fittin' name, the fust uv it," assented Ben.

"Amen!" shouted Granny Lovett, much in earnest, and more in fun. "'Tain't everybody thet would hev got him, I kin tell you. Ef it hadn't been you wuz needin' one so bad, Susie, an' I hadn't took it fer a sign fer me to stop, I'd 'a' took him to my hum an' fotched him up myself. The Lord is marciful to drunken men an' babies, ez the Scrip—the almanac says."

This was the beginning of the chapter. The coat-sleeve was hung up on a nail in Ben Harner's cabin, like a garment in a morgue, for the identification of the throw-away, who now, dead to his own parents, was born again and regularly installed as Hedgerow Harner; meeting, however, with the loss of part of his name before the sun went down, for Ben and Susie dropped the "row," to call him only "Leetle Hedge." There he grew and thrived, and stood valiantly for his priority rights against the crowd of his successors.

He passed the age of the serpent's curse, stood upright with chair assistance, obtained legitimately his dread of fire, displayed the usual button, penny, and thimble eccentricities in matter of diet, bravely cut his first tooth on a piece of bacon-rind, had full allotment of tumbles, pinched fingers, and bumps, and mastered the infantile vocabulary of boo, moo, bow-wow, ah, bah, mom, pop, and the syllabic difficulties of quoo-roo.

The slip and barefooted paragraphs of his history were succeeded by pantaloons and patches, and the various dramatic passages in fights with gobblers, contests with dogs, dances with hornets, and dances in and out of time to slippers, switches, bare hands, mush-sticks, and brooms.

If Granny Lovett did not count him in, in her annual account of children, as a job lot, she nevertheless reckoned her interest in him as worthy constant guardianship, and testifying tramps to see him, until his shapely legs were stout enough to mount the trail and carry him, with boyish strut, to Granny Lovett's cabin, there to make report with kiss and hug of love returned and example hoarded.

Page after page, numbered by days and years, of slow event, such as record the fishing, hunting, trading, frolicking, fighting, sparking, scant working, and scant living career of a West Virginia mountaineer's life, were added to the simple history; and now Hedge Harner, handsome and sinewy, quick-witted, good-humored, idle, was poor as the day he was first clasped in Granny Lovett's arms, excepting so far as a two-sleeved shirt, a pair of pantaloons, and a fraction of a hat increased his share of gain from coming into this world.

But now a hand was upon the leaf, turning it for the writing of a new chapter; and that hand was the master-hand of love.

Hedge sung and whistled, shouted to the crows and eagles, as he crossed the rocky point and neared Granny Lovett's cabin, where a shout of laughter greeted him from the door as he turned a lot of handsprings and stood upside down before the shaking superfluousness of the laughing dame.

"Great nations, Hedge, what air you comin' here fer, whirlin' like a twistin'-wheel without a rim?" she asked, in jolly surprise, as Hedge turned to his feet and posed before her in attitude of well-feigned misery.

"Hit's high noon, granny, an' I'm hungry ez a preacher at a corn-huskin'. I was tryin' to fetch my breakfast back."

"Did you hev luck, Hedge?" laughed Granny.

"Not a hate. Kin you give a poor feller thet's empty ez an eel-skin a bit uv grub? My innards thinks my throat's cut."

"You're jist ez foolin' ez ever, Hedge,—allus foolin'. The woman that gits you fer a man'll never die uv sorrow. She'll allus hev a mess uv laughin' about the house. Pack me in a load uv wood, Hedge, an' I'll soon hev a bite fer you. If you asks fer fishes you won't git stones in my house, ary time; ez the Scripter says."

"No feller knows that better ner I do, granny. You've allus been powerful good to me. I'll hack up a pile uv wood fer you while you're gittin' it. Where's the children?"

Granny Lovett laughed again. "You wouldn't git no dinner afore sundown, Hedge, ef I j'ined tellin' you whar all uv 'em is. Fifteen uv pop's an' mine afore he died: them's the ones I calls the raglers. Then thar's two that got left frum timber-rafts down the river an' never wuz called fer: them's the strays. They wuz hungered, an' I took 'em in; wantin' somethin' to drink, an' I guv it to 'em an' no begrudgin', ez the Book sez. Thar wuz poor Vic Young's baby, an' Beck Myers's boy, thet she quitted in her cabin a-starvin' when she runned away with Tom Cavin; Vic went to that burn frum which no traveller gits back (I hope that burn don't mean hell's fire, Hedge; fer it weren't Vic's fault): them two I calls lefts. An' four uv Lige Lovett's children (pop's brother, you mind him, thet wuz killed in the war, an' Jane Marthy—Aunt Marthy, you mind her—died with it in her heart when she heerd the news. An' she said with her dyin' breath thet Jude Lovett would keer fer 'em. An' so I did, Hedge, like they were my own). Pop's sheer, I calls them, 'cause they wuz his kin. An' five uv my sister's young uns,—Mary Susan Greene's; she died suddint of subonia" (pneumonia). "Sam Greene, her man,

wuz a no-account feller: so I took 'em, an' he's never come fer 'em to this day. Pop an' me called 'em mom's sheer,—kinder countin' mine ag'in' his sheer. He use' ter laugh at me fer bein' one ahead. He wuz a good-hearted man, an' didn't keer. 'More's the merrier, mom,' he use' ter say: 'fotch 'em along, an' I'll plant more taters.' He wuz a workersome man, pop wuz, an' hed a nateral likin' fer childern. Hit were a ter'ble loss when he died, three year ago the ninth day uv November. He wuz never so pleased ez when he wuz playin' mule-kickin', with a hull lot uv 'em on his back, an' a hull lot uv 'em leadin' him, an' a passel uv 'em twistin' his coat-tail to make him go. You mind you use' ter help, many's the time, when you come frum Ben's up to see your ole granny an' play. Then there wuz the two pick-ups,—Dillie Mellon an' Mose Hayes,—thet I jist picked up an' run off with, 'cause they wuz gittin' nothin' but lickin's an' beatin's at home. I give Jake Mellon an' Alviry Hayes three bushel an' two pecks uv ingins fer 'em, an' I told 'em ef ever they come round my place fer 'em I'd pour the kittle on 'em. Thet's what I said, Hedge; none uv your vials uv wrath, but kittles uv hot water. An' they knowed I'd scald 'em well, afore I'd give 'em the poor childern to ill-treat ag'in." Granny Lovett's face showed plainly, by a stern set of its kindliness, that her compassion was backed by courage. It changed after a moment's thought, to show mixed feelings working with its muscles.

"Then, Hedge," Granny continued, "thar's the two throw-aways, Elderberry—Great nations, Hedge, what a sight uv comfort she's been to me! Blessed is them thet mourn, for they shall hev comfortin', ef they wait long enough: that's what the good Lord promises; an' that's what I said when pop died, an' Berry come to me with a plate uv vittles, an' fixed up my hair, tender ez a baby's, while I wuz eatin' uv 'em. She's jist ez lovin' ez a pigeon nestin'-time, an' ez purty ez a lily uv the field, an' Solomon in all his glory wuzn't ez purty ez her, whether she's fixed up er not; ez the good Book says. I finded her in the elderberry-bushes, down by Sank Roberts's cabin on Jurdan Creek, an', dear little creeter, she wuz nigh dead, an' white ez the elder-bloss-soms thet almost kivered her. Thet's why I named her Elderberry, —Berry fer short; an' she's ez full uv goodness ez any berry thet ever growed. If I wuz a young feller like you, Hedge, I know what tree I'd light on ef I wuz goin' to pick one."

Hedge smiled knowingly, then said, rather sheepishly, "I hain't got the peg I want fer lightin' on yit, but I'm goin' to light ez soon ez I kin. I come over to tell you 'bout it, granny."

Granny Lovett did not take the hint. Her motherly ferment was still frothing over with memories, and the roster of her nurslings must continue as long as the several ranks remained to be told off. "But that other throw-away," she said, with an expression of regretful sorrow, "I never hed no good uv him noway, Hedge. He's been a snag in my flesh ever since I finded him in the fence-corner ez I wuz comin' home frum night meetin' at Jurdan school-house, more'n twenty year ago. His leetle back was hurted by the chuckin' among the stones. I nussed him night an' day, an' pop an' me tended him fer the mis'ries in

his back, an' whoopin'-cough, an' chickin-pox, an' mumps, an' the fever, an' give him our name,—ez forrid a name an' honest ez there is in this hull kentry,—an' tried to fetch him up on the right trail, so's when he gits old he'll not depart frum it. I hope the good Lord'll forgive me, Hedge, fer sayin' it, but it's best out, like the measles: Fence Corner Lovett is just mean enough fer anything; the Old Scratch himself can't outstrip him fer meanness. I hain't a-keerin' what he says to me, fer he's a poor cripple, ef he is ez strong ez an ox; an' I've spared the saplin' many a time, an' sp'iled the child, an' hez to bear the judgment fer it, if he biteth like a sarpint an' sasses like an adder. But yere he is, now, worritin' the life out uv Berry fer to marry him, —him crooked ez a toad, an' her sleek ez a poplar. He's allus spyin' on her, an' j'alous, an' allus gittin' big-head; an' them brought up children together like David an' Jonathan,—only she's a girl. I'm allus a-frettin' fearin' he'll do her a harm; fer she won't hev him. I'd rather find her lyin' among the elderberry-bushes, dead, than her hisn."

Hedge tried to break in on her recital of sorrow as the tears came into her eyes, and she swung backward and forward in the cabin door, with an overbalance of woe. He got as far as to say, emphatically, "Cor. shan't tech Berry; she's"—when Granny's slow fuse to passion burned up again to an explosive point. "I knows it, Hedge; I knows it. You'll not let him tech her. She takes to you powerful; she allus wuz your leetle sweetheart. I mind how you allus gave her the biggest mud pies when you wuz playin' keepin' cabin together, an' the biggest chips fer slices uv bacon. You'll pertect her, I know you will; an' you'll hev the blessin' uv your ole granny, thet found you in the hedgerow, an' out uv the mouths uv babes an' sucklin's wuz comin' yellin'; that's likelier to come than wisdom, ez the Scripter says. An' I've hed an eye on you iver since, an' keers fer you ez much ez them thet's pop's an' mom's, raglers, an' more'n all them thet I've put down with a bit uv coal on the inside uv pop's ole trunk-lid, yere in the cabin, 'long with nine gangs uv fours crossed,—like pop showed me how to keep tally,—makin' forty-five thet I've grannied fer other uns. You've been a sight uv comfort to me, Hedge, an' I know you'll keer for Berry ag'in' that measly Corner. Poor feller! I wonder if he's hed his dinner. He hain't been here since mornin'. Carry in the wood, Hedge. Great nations! I clean forgetted about your turnin' over empty, an' me to git you somethin'. Some uv the children'll stop ez the're comin' frum meetin'. Berry she's down to the spring arter water. She said she'd fool a bit arter water, an' git a han'ful uv posies fer me. She's allus doin' somethin' comfortin'. Fetch the wood."

April suns and April showers had just given the mountain-sides their first coat of green; had just made the winter crown of the white-fenced yard about Granny Lovett's cabin a background for golden dandelions, shining plantain clusters, rayed frills of dock, and bristling tufts of grass spears. Even the senseless logs in the wood-pile had here and there made a sickly effort, under their genial warmth, to bring forth leaves and buds, as the season prompted and custom sanctioned.

The clapboards were cleanly gray from the washing; the stone chimney-stack, buttressing the logs in staid solemnity, was bright in its white-washed company and darker shadow, where the sun-rays cheered it up. The cabin window stood open for the block of light it caught to lay as golden tablet on the cabin floor; and the paper curtain waved in crackling joy, as now and then it joined with the wind in play to keep the intruder out. Below, the cove-like bench on the mountain-side, known as Granny Lovett's clearing, and the wooded nooks of Big Head Fork, were domed with new-leaved beeches and spired with never-fading hemlock. Their turreted walls were rich with the yellow bloom of the leafless spice-bush, armored with the newly-made ivy shields, and steeled by cold gray lichens plated upon the sandy rocks.

Although it was Sunday, the echoes played with the sharp blows of Hedge's axe, and cleft the clear air with wedge of sound incisive as the blade making the chips fly by earnest chopping. Granny Lovett was busy within the cabin, stirring up the coals in the wide fireplace, and, down on her knees and hands upon the hearth, was transforming herself into a mighty bellows, that sent ashes and sparks, smoke and flame, to climb the sooty chimney. Suddenly Hedge stopped on a stick half cut, whirled the axe about his head, and brought it down with a one-handed blow that sunk it deep into the log to stay until next wanted. He laughed merrily, as he wiped his sweated face upon his sleeve, then sauntered leisurely to the cabin door, his eyes alive with twinkles, to say to Granny Lovett, now red as the morocco of her wooden counterpart, "I forgetted this wuz Sunday, granny; I b'lieve I need a day of rest."

"Great nations, Hedge! what do you need restin' fer? You kin work ez well ez any man livin', an' so you do, chance times, when you're helpin' some poor body beside yourself; but t'other times you don't do ez much ez a cat. You take no thought of to-morrer, what you shall eat, or what you shall drink, er what clothes you're goin' to put on, ary time; ez the Lord tells us. But I'm kinder thinkin' they must hev been a heap more givin'er kind uv people in them days than they air now."

"Thet's 'cause I only hev one shirt, granny. 'Pears to me there hain't much ch'ice in one uv a thing. I'm goin' to work now, in arnest. I've moved in the old cabin at Fightin' P'int, an' hev my board an' washin' there. I'm goin' to fix her up scrumptious, an' plant a gardin, an' 'tend a patch there, ef I kin borry some seed, an' a hoe, an' some jimmin' tricks."

"Great nations, Hedge!" exclaimed Granny, sitting upright before the now blazing wood, as if impaled by astonishment,—"great nations! what's got inter you? My oxen an' my fatlin's are killed, come unto the weddin'. Is that it, Hedge? Air you thinkin' uv gittin' j'ined?" Then motherly curiosity bounced all surprise out of her. "Who's the girl, Hedge?"

Hedge found himself confronted by a formidable confession and a likely shower of advice, that he had not braced himself for: so he skirted the obstruction in the way of candor with a hybrid laugh,—a cross between evasiveness and bashfulness and fun: "I forgetted this

was Sunday, granny. I b'lieve I need restin' before beginnin' work in arnest, an' sich a hefty job ez packin' hum a woman."

"Thet's right, Hedge; thet's p'intedly right. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, ef thar's enough kindlin' cut, an' wood fer washin'-day,—Monday,—ez the Scripter says."

Granny's curiosity was relaxing the stiffness of her astonishment and wilting her to supplicating attitude. "Who's the girl, Hedgy dear?" she repeated. "I hope it hain't Peggy Byrne. They say you've been keepin' company with her purty ragler this while back. I've got nothin' ag'in' Peggy, 'cept she hasn't the saft answer allus handy 'bout her to turn away her own wrath, ez the good Book says,—my way uv speakin' it. 'Pears to me that's the way the Lord meaned it: answer saft when you've got a mad on. T'other way means you'll git a tongue-lashin' ef you don't. Be keerful, Hedge; you won't stand tongue-lashin' good."

Hedge laughed in his careless, happy way. "She hain't telled me who she is yit, granny. Han' me a pail, an' I'll fetch it full uv water from the spring."

Granny Lovett's face became redolent with a rush of joyous surmise, as she caught in his words promise of a cherished hope that Hedge would "keer fer Berry fer all time to come." She hastily rose by hand and knee help, after the manner of babies, to tottering perpendicularity, and straightway grabbed the wooden pail from its bench to hurry it into Hedge's waiting hand.

"You'll find her at the spring er thereabouts, foolin' round, pickin' posies fer me. I hev water enough. You need restin', so you do. So does Berry; she's a good worker an' a good girl. You both need restin'. Great nations! you needn't speed; the fire's slow, an' I'll keep things warm fer you, ef your dinner gits done afore you does. I'll give you a pair uv quilts, the'r likes hain't in these parts; an' lend you a hoe, an' all the gardenin'-seeds you want. You needn't speed, Hedge."

Hedge Harner had never taken life into partnership with him. He was intimate with it, friendly to it, enjoyed it; but it was to him—if he ever thought of it by chance in any serious way—nothing more than a jolly companion, to be lived with, endured, and, in a joking way, cheated as much as possible. The idea of marrying Berry, as suggested by Granny Lovett, was as big a piece of fun as he had listened to for many a day. "What fun he would have foolin' Granny!" was the first monkey notion popping out of his mental box, and, monkey-like, he proceeded to play with it. But his real reason for slinging away his axe and starting for the spring was, in his good-heartedness, to know how much Corner Lovett had worried Berry, and to assure her of his help if ever needed.

Swinging the bucket by its bail, he gladdened the excited Granny's heart by a co-operative look, disappeared around the cabin's corner, went out the back gate of the yard, wended the well-worn path between the pig-pen, corn-crib, and open-legged adjunct for all rebellious or necessitous animals, then struck the stone-jutted, wash-narrowed, laurel-bound, well-patted path to the spring, singing, with a voice rich in

natural tones but prolific in surprising squawks when up in the flighty region of the higher notes,—

"When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies."

The spring from the mountain-side was too modest to show itself with fussy bubble. The necessities of the cabin had involved it with a dip-hole; had it not been for this, it would have glided silently out of the moss-cushioned rock and stolen away unseen, except for the traitorous glisten of pebbles, to the stream below. But the dip-hole enforced publicity; and when Hedge arrived there it was doing strange duty without a sign of discontent or ruffle of surface.

Around its edges were cooling ruptured stems of white-rayed blood-root, pink-haloed, green-eyed anemones, beauty-clustered arbutus, filigreed Solomon's-seal, and hollow-stalked dandelions (shaming bashful kalmias by golden offerings), all making frame for a reflected face they should have been content to stay forever with.

The ringing promise of Hedge Harner "to wipe his weeping eyes" when he got good title for his sky-mansion had not disturbed Berry Lovett, as she sat on the ground by the spring-side, beyond a crowding of the rich color in her cheeks, a glance of pleasure up the path in search of first sight, a little tilt of her head for better hearing of his voice, and a quick calling in of marvellously well shaped ankles to where a modest tuck secured them.

There is little poetry for poetry's sake in a West Virginia mountain girl; yet for those who seek it unsullied from Nature's womb, she has most bountiful supply in lines of form, in swing of limb and pose of figure, in speaking gesture, in mesh of hair and trick of back-comb, in tuck of skirt and unpinned bodice, in rounded knees and soft elbow-creases, in velvety throat and voluptuous arms, in voice as flexible as a 'cello's tones and purring as a kitten's, in eyes that search forever or trust forever or snap to cut the present mighty short.

As Berry Lovett leaned over the water of the dip-hole, with the flowers she had placed there to freshen framing her loveliness, she had no idea that the picture was worthy of a master's brush; or, when she bowed over her lapful of wild gatherings, to fuss and sort with dimpled fingers, or snip superfluous leaves from scraggy twigs capped with waxy dogwood blossoms, she had no suspicion that even a laureate's eye would see aught but her ankles. Even that is stretching fancy too far; for she, in her mountain ignorance, had not a notion of what a laureate was, nor would she have thought one Hedge Harner's equal if she had known, or "half so cute at seein' things."

The combination of color she was making in her hand-bunch of flowers was harmonious as a crazy-quilt and solid as a mosaic. Poetry? Why, Berry Lovett's whole idea of it was in the only rhyme she knew outside of hymn memory:

Come, Philanders, let us be a-marchin',
Every one her true love a-sarchin';
Sarch your true love now or never,
Or yander sun'll set forever;

and the prophesied phenomenon of that had never alarmed her one iota. Beautiful she was, with less than twenty summers to age her freshness; and winning she was, in that slow loveliness which gives one time to be enfolded. The lingering of the spring, the quiet sway about her of the creepers growing from the rocks, the very worshipping gaze of the bold-eyed frog perched on the flood-stone of the dip-hole, testified to it.

Hedge was caught by the spell as he turned a sharp elbow in the steep path and looked down upon her from the top of rocky steps terracing it to the spring. He had changed his doleful tune to "I'm de blackest niggah eber shined a boot," and was doing the pantomime of it with an imaginary boot on one arm and an invisible brush doing speculative polish in the free hand, when he got the first glimpse of Berry. "Geewuts," he exclaimed, under his breath, "hain't she purty? She's ez purty ez a posy-bed! She wuz the best uv 'em all to me. Nobody shall worrit her none, nohow, no time. Whoop-ee, Berry! Who air you bunchin' posies fer?"

His clear "Whoop-ee" made the echoes of Big Head Fork cheery with its fulness. Berry looked up, and broke them into merry laughs. "Why, Hedge," she said, gayly, "you're peert ez the cat-bird I heerd awhile ago callin' fer his mate. How-dee? I've been gatherin' posies fer granny. She won't pick none herself. She jist stays home keerin' fer us an' everybody, an' nothin' fer herself. I'm goin' to give 'em to her."

Hedge sat himself down upon the lowest step, where nothing but the water of the dip-hole separated him from Berry, yet kindly in its purity laid their shadows close. Hedge saw it, and it tickled his light fancy. Watching his shadow, he tried to manœuvre it, by bob and bump and slow approach, until he had his curly head mirrored close to the sheeny folds of Berry's yellow hair. "Look, Berry, we're sparkin' in the dip-hole." And then he laughed as she turned to gaze upon his strategy.

The girl colored with pleasure at the sight, and moved her head coquettishly to bring the shadows closer.

"Geewuts, they're touchin'! Let's see how a kiss would go in the spring. I never tried one under water afore."

Berry jerked her shadow away with a pout upon her rosy lips which plainly told of a warmer place to put it.

"Hedge, you're the foolin'est man I ever knowed. Who but you'd ever git sich a fool notion ez kissin' under water? It ud spile the spring, Hedge."

"An' the kiss too, Berry. I'll jist take the one that come all-fired near gittin' drownded."

The bound across the dip-hole was so quick, the bending backward of her neck against a supporting arm, held well in place to save its snapping, the catching of her lips in pout before they had time to harden against attack, were so sudden, that Hedge met nothing more formidable than a jab of flowers, tightly-closed eyes, and the involuntary kick of a tucked-away foot, to combat his philanthropic purposes.

It was well for Hedge Harner that he sprang back to his rocky seat

as quickly as he left it, and sat sheltered behind a stub of rock that made rugged baluster to the step-way. For across the narrow ravine which bedded Big Head Fork, and level with the spring, the glistening barrel of a rifle covered his every movement, and only waited his getting out of range with Berry to shoot its bullet unerringly to his heart. His movement was too sudden and unexpected for aim to follow or pull of trigger.

While Berry fingered her tossed curls, tucked away her routed foot, preened her rumpled dress, colored with maiden surprise, and scolded with amiable volubility, Hedge, in total ignorance of his danger, was lolling upon the steps, looking at her with contentment, not unmixed with self-laudation for easy escape with a captured kiss, and admiration of Berry's sweet discomfiture.

"Hedge," said Berry, with suspicious severity, "I'll never speak to you if you kiss me that-a-way ag'in."

"How do you want it done next time, Berry? I hain't much uv a hand at it, but I thought I done it good. Tell me how you like it done, an' I'll try to please you best I kin," replied Hedge, with good-humored impertinence. "Hain't that the way Corner does it?"

"I didn't mean—He never—Corner never kissed me sence I wuz leetle," Berry stammered, and then burst out indignantly at the insinuation. "I think you mightn't hev said that, Hedge. You never said sich a thing afore. I wouldn't hev left no feller do that without gittin' mad but—but you, an' tellin' him to take his hat. Corner hez pestered the life out uv me, an' he's gittin' wuss every day. Ef he wuzn't a poor cripple, I'd hate him. I do anyway, but it's a sin to say it. I thought you wuz my fr'en',—like we growed up together,—an' I didn't think—I never thought you'd kiss me an' say sich a thing. I'm jist left to take keer of myself. Nobody keers fer me no more, 'cept granny,—an' Corner, that I don't want to."

Tears were strangers to Berry's blue eyes, but they came bravely, well introduced by flutter of surprise, fostered indignation, sense of disappointment, and feminine instinct that they were the very best friends in the world to her at that particular time. She relieved the hem of her calico dress from foot-guarding duty, to wipe her weeping eyes with an earnestness Hedge had never thought of as he sang his promise to do likewise.

If Hedge Harner's heart had been pinned to his sleeve, it would not have been visible to the dress-covered eyes of Berry; if it had, its workings would have been much more mysterious to her than the palpable knowledge of its beatings, as Hedge leaped the spring and stole his arms about her neck to press her close to where it thumped in kind compassion.

Again the rifle-barrel lay levelled at him. Its muzzle quivered, now sought steadiness, now moved about in restless seeking, and, as though it would charm its distant prey by deadly fascination, glared with a single eye that flashed death only. Behind it was a face half hidden by soft leaf-clusters, white and hard and glittering as the quartz boulders that studded the mountain-side. The eye that looked along the barrel was fixed and shining as a serpent's; the hand that clutched it was set

in a grip blued with outstanding veins; the long finger upon the trigger was hooked with the deadliness of a fang fixed to discharge its venom; the crouching body to which they belonged was shaken in every fibre, like a sail filled with a veering storm. But the eye did its bidding, and the finger did its work. A tongue of flame darted from the rifle's mouth; the echoes gave it rattling welcome.

A wild shriek rang out, that added terror to the flight of nesting birds, and lingered with crag and pass to bar their flying-ways. Before the last sound died, a dread-stricken form was fleeing through the bushes, scaling rocks, clambering logs, leaping gullies, pursued by the demon of conscience and the horror of a mistake. Corner Lovett was a murderer at heart, the death-shriek of the one he loved stirring madness in his brain,—jealousy, hatred, remorse wrestling with grief, with fear as clammy coadjutor. On he went, briers scoring their anger upon him at sudden dash or rapid thrust, snags tearing him in blind encounter, rocks, with bruise and cut, resenting frantic assault or reckless leap, the very vines in knotted league against him. Startled squirrels barked their wrath, crows cawed and flew in watchful circles where he sped, hovering buzzards ceased their kite-like swing above him and flapped their wings for higher safety. He cursed them for following his track, and cursed them again that they fled to mark his way.

The divide was crossed. He welcomed the roar of Big Head Fork as it dashed between the Fighting Rocks, announcing the goal of his terrible race. He stopped, trembled, closed his ears with clutching hands, as the scream of an eagle rang piercingly above in mockery of the death-cry ringing in them. Like one groping in the dark away from some haunting evil, he felt his way down among the battling rocks, until, by a vine-hidden crevice, he reached the water's edge. There a dark swirl warred unceasingly with some mighty boulders, and piled its foam on rocky shelf and offshoot in testimony of its wrath. As he stood upon its brink, an angry shout startled him. High up on the trail, across the stream and above him, on the frowning rock-face, stood Hedge Harner, torn, bloody, blown, yelling fiercely at him, "Stop, you killer! I hev you!"

Again Corner Lovett's face grew hard and glittering as the spray-dashed rocks beside him; again the eye that was fixed and shining over the levelled rifle shot forth its murderous light, as white-faced rage bred answering laugh and shout of hellish defiance: "Come on; she's past your gittin' her!"

With reckless impetuosity, Hedge Harner threw himself over the edge of the trail, and swung from sapling to shrub, from crack to ledge, from crumbling rock-hold to grasp of bared root, down the precipitous rock-way, to gain the level of the stream.

With devilish coolness, the trapped fiend planted the butt of his rifle on the ground, swung his stoppered powder-horn and bullet-laden pouch where his practised hand commanded them, and charged the empty weapon with powder, patch, and ball. With ramrod held between his teeth for rapid use if one ball failed, with fingers mechanically searching the nipple to adjust the cap, he looked up from his work to mark the whereabouts of his pursuer. He was too late. He saw

Hedge Harner springing upon him from a low boulder, his hands spread like the claws of a ferocious beast, his brown eyes bloodshot and glaring their deadly purpose, his face set with a hardness that would relax only with the death of one of them.

The cap slipped from Corner's fingers. He clubbed his rifle, but Hedge was upon him. Its blow overreached its mark; the gun flew from his hands and shattered itself against a rock. He felt himself in the grip of a Hercules, and staggering, rolling, falling, sinking deep under the water of the swirl. Instantly the hold relaxed. He felt himself free and rising to the surface. There he gave a gasp for breath, shook the water from his face, threw a quick glance about him as the current carried him around the boulder's foot: another gasp, another look, and he disappeared again in the seething pool.

It was well for Hedge Harner that down in the water's solid depths he knew he must at once have air, and must loosen his clutch to gain its needed help. Blown, excited, his breast going with rapid heaves, his heart thumping from the death-struggle as he fell in the water, he knew his hold was useless. It was well for him that a friendly ledge caught him at the shallow outlet as he rose and the force of rushing waters crowded him to the surface; for he had seen the first starry flashes of death, and felt the peace of parting consciousness. It was well that Corner Lovett had not seen him lying helpless where the water's kindly push was urging him to its top; for his rage-crooked fingers would have tightened the clutch that death already had upon his throat, to hold it firm until his last heart-beat announced surrender. Life had but started from its seat in Hedge. The first convulsive gulp of air admonished it of active duties, and commanded it to its own protection. One less brave than Hedge Harner would have thought of his burning lungs and stinging throat, smarting eyes and rasped nostrils; but in him one pain dwarfed all others,—the pain of passion.

Before he could muster strength to unlock his cramped muscles, while stretched in rigidity upon the rock, he turned angry scrutiny along the pool, hoping to catch sight of his mortal foe. As he crawled, tottered, rose to his feet, his protruding eyes glared about him like those of one dead searching for a sign of life. As motion came to answer growing thought, he scanned the rocks, and pierced the very depths of the swirl with looks bent to solve their holdings. He shook his tightened fists and gurgled his boiling rage at them: "You've got him, damn you." Then, as calmer thoughts gained mastery and caution took control, he entered the pool again, and swimming sought each rock for loosened moss, or flood of drip, or other sign that marked escape; but nowhere was there tell-tale of a flight.

The water and search had somewhat cooled Hedge now. "He is dead," he said, aloud. "Drownded. Hit's a blessed riddance. Hit saves me killin' him er a mob hangin' him. The coward!—woman-killer! Ef I hed him, livin' or dead, I'd—— 'Tain't no use. Poor Berry!"

The name gave him new and softened impulse. "I must git back to her, poor girl. I left her lyin' there dyin', lookin' at me, an' holdin'

my han',—holdin' on to me, an' tryin' to kiss me back ag'in, like I wuz kissin' her,—kissin' me good-by, ez she went dead. Oh, Berry! my leetle girl thet use' to play hoss with me, an' go fishin' 'long with me, an' go to sleep on my lap when you wuz tired. Oh, Berry! my leetle sweetheart! An' she tried to kiss me back ag'in, good-by,—an' her dyin'. Hit's all my fault; I wuz on'y foolin'. I kinder thought she wuz leetle yit. I didn't mean nothin'."

Hedge threw his arms about in wild grief, and swayed as one falling from a blow. He beat his forehead against the hard rock, as if to drive away distracting visions; or folded his arms tenderly as about a loved image, when tender words and memory's sweetest overflow in tears changed the scene from one of agony. He clinched his hands and cursed himself when he spoke of his thoughtlessness, but a pleasurable tone, full of trembling pathos, blended with the outburst of sorrow when he said, "An' she tried to kiss me back ag'in,—like I wuz kissin' her."

With tears washing the bloody brier-cuts on his face, the water from his drenched garments dripping little pools at his feet, hatless, tattered, bruised and torn, Hedge Harner stood looking into the swirl. "Hit's strange he don't come up," he muttered. "He couldn't hev floated out uv yere without lodgin'; an' the dry on the rocks shows he couldn't hev run while I wuz nigh drownded. Maybe he's gone straight to hell, whar he ought to go," he added, fiercely. "Ef I chance to git thar, I'll make it hotter fer him,—ef the fire holds out. Yere's his gun. How did he get yere, I wonder? I trailed him over the divide, an' seed he wuz makin' fer Fightin' Rocks, an' I crossed Big Head to head him off. How he got down yere I can't calkilate noway. I'll trail him back'ards, an' find out. I must git home to granny an' Berry. Poor Berry!"

Gathering up the fragments of the rifle, he again made searching inquiry of the pool and its rocky environments. A vine freshly torn from slender wall-hold, and the scratch of shoe-nails on a sandy rock, marked the entrance to the narrow crevice through which Corner Lovett had descended. Surprised at its presence,—for Hedge Harner thought he knew every crannied secret of the mountains thereabouts,—fearing that his prey might have escaped that way, his instinctive wood-craft sent him to his knees to solve the meaning of the faintest sign. The infallible record of dryness assured him that no wet foot had trodden there; enough of that. But where did the well-worn pathway lead? Hedge rose, parted the overhanging vines, and entered resolutely upon it. He slowly followed the dumb leading of worn stones, polished projections, abraded roots, torn mosses, bended saplings, snapped twigs, nail-furrowed slides,—all pointing certainty of direction and fixing unerringly the secret way to the summit of Fighting Rocks, where it joined the break but newly made through the forest undergrowth, whence Corner Lovett began his mad rush. Once upon this, Hedge followed its direct course back to the fatal spot where, not an hour before, the whizzing ball had sped, far less regardless of himself than the frantic man who tore its way.

Across the ravine, the white face of Berry stood out from the dark

rock against which he rested her before his flight, like one of marble from frame of sombre hangings. Her eyes were closed, her lips were parted; something glistened upon them like rain-drops in the sun. He paused an instant to look. His heart gave a joyous leap from the sullenness of despair, as he saw her arm move wanderingly toward the spring beside her, her hand drop to its water, and the few clinging drops raised with halting weakness to her mouth. If then and there Hedge Harner had seen her take winged flight to the cloud-land above her, the sight could not more steadfastly have fixed his gladdened eyes, or rapture set his face in happier colors. As the wave of joy receded, stout purpose came with its ebb. He dashed across the ravine, shouting, "I'm comin', Berry. I'm comin'."

While he splashed through the creek, and climbed the shrub-grown bank, slipping, stumbling in his eager haste, he thought she might not know his cry, and, startled, loose her hold on life. He changed his voice, and filled the air with tones as loving as a bird's call to its mate. "I'm comin', Berry; your Hedge is comin',—your leetle Hedge is comin'."

When the distance of a few rods was passed, he durst not touch her. He looked piteously into her death-clad face, and, leaning in oppressive fear, whispered, "Berry, it's me,—Hedge. I'm yere,—Hedge." There was an outward movement of her lips; her wet hand, cold and white as the cloud image in the spring, moved toward him. Trifling as the motions were, they broke the spell on Hedge. "She's tryin' to kiss me back ag'in," he thought.

Tenderly, tearfully, with a great sob, he laid his face against her own; after a little while he kissed her. It brought from her a deep-drawn breath, and with that breath new life was born. Her eyes opened and turned upon him as living lights, which not a restraining film obscured. Her hand contracted in his with a pressure that might have been but a muscle's twitch, but it was strong with love as the wedding-clasp for all eternity.

Hedge was one to act when action was thrust upon him. He felt the burning of her life. He knew he must quickly fan the flame, or it would go out. He had seen her struggling for water. Scooping a handful, he held it to her lips, and watched her slowly swallow it. Then, as she tried to smile, he gathered her carefully in his arms, and carried her swiftly to Granny Lovett's cabin.

Granny Lovett had dotted her kitchen with signs of pleasure at Hedge's prolonged stay with Berry, and was herself redundant with happy speculation about it. The table-cloth was folded to a size requiring neighborly placing of plates,—two of them,—staring their forgetfulness that Berry had had her dinner. The chairs were "set up" as close together as divergence of legs would permit, and the coffee outfit was cunningly arranged so that hands must get conveniently close in the pouring out. Her face grew shiny from the imagined heartiness of her congratulatory slap upon Hedge's back, as she shattered the brown crust of an airy loaf by a sounding thwack. Every trace of wrinkle was smoothed out of the white table-cloth by loving strokes that she felt herself laying upon Berry's plump shoulders or

pretty head. Significant smiles were involuntarily practised, knowing speeches were internally rehearsed, while every bit of bright tin-ware in the cabin reflected her smiles in distorted ruddiness.

The chief end of Granny Lovett's universal motherhood was, marrying her charges as she wished and planned; therein her greatest reward lay; and she had been contentedly successful. Berry and Hedge were her pets; being the last, they had the tapering end of her affections, but it was the keenest end and brightest. She longed to see them mated and nesting. She knew that all Hedge Harner needed to make an industrious man of him was to give him some one to work for beside himself; the manhood was in him, what he needed was womanhood to push it into fruitful visibility. She knew that Berry was the one to do it with loving hand, and then to continue it with her loving coaxings.

Chuckling to herself, she gave a last look at her tempting table-trap to catch a couple, and again repeated, but this time in triumphant certainty, "My oxen and my fatlin's air killed, come unto the weddin', an' I'll give Berry a live cow, an' all the cabin tricks I kin spare, an' make Hedge a weddin'-suit uv clothes; ez the Scripter says."

She heard Hedge shouting, and thought of slyly hiding herself where she could have fulfilment of her joy in the eye-comfort of their unrestrained love-making. She chuckled again as she changed her mind: "Hit's more fun to look innercent an' unbeknowin', an' watch 'em slyin' an' lookin' sheepish." So, settling her face to the impassiveness of a gourd, she listened to the coming footsteps.

What a topple and crash of her castle from its airy height, when Hedge entered the cabin door! All her life Granny Lovett had been a stop against emergencies, a solid rip-rap against the dammed flood of untoward events, but Hedge's appearance with bloody face and lifeless armload was like a torrent sweeping all before it. Reposing his burden upon the bed, Hedge turned to her in breathless appeal, before her stunned senses could gather themselves to give life to thought.

"Ther's life in her yit, granny. She's been lookin' at me. She's alive. Quick, granny, water! She's been lookin' at me jist now. Fer God's sake fetch her round! Corner shot her. Keep her livin'," jerked out Hedge. His words came fast, with clogging sobs and choking heart-beats for gripping punctuation.

The hot blast of Corner's name and murderous deed flashed Granny's numbed faculties into instant blaze. "The varmint!" She gasped the words in her throat, like a crackling flame in a narrow flue. "The hump-backed varmint! The come-across-the-field [bastard] varmint! Did you kill him, Hedge? Is them cuts in your face of his make? The're pizen ef they air. The sarpint! I'll smash his head with my heel, ez the good Book says. Did you kill him, Hedge? Did you send him to hell's fire without a chance fer—fer to say a word? He kin yell fer a drop uv water, an' I won't give him none; ner let any one, ef I hev a say. Shot my Berry! My purty, poor Berry! What am I doin'? Cussin' him, the varmint?—wastin' time. Leave me to her, Hedge. Berry; honey; Berry. Hit's granny, honey, granny. Look at your dear ole granny, honey."

The blue eyes opened like a dreamy child's to the lull of a mother's voice or sweetened look, and then closed upon the love-light in peace.

"Thank the good Lord, she's livin'; an' she knows me, Hedge. She knows her granny. I'll fetch her roun', ef the good Lord's willin'. I feel His power in my right hand—ef I hed a pair uv scissors to cut her clothes off without movin' her. Never mind where they are; I'll unloosen 'em. Where's she hit?"

"I don't know. I seed no blood. I—I hedn't time to sarch."

"Thet's the first thing to do: sarch 'em arly, an' ye shall find 'em. Thet's the first thing. Now I'll fetch her roun'."

Granny was herself again. The certainty of her words, with the fortifying interjection of Scripture, showed that.

The close calico ruff that circled Berry's neck like the calix of a fair flower was loosened by Granny's deft fingers. The spotless richness of skin and curve lay creamy and soft, as pin and button were plucked from trusty hold. Only a blue cord of twisted worsted, holding a polished stone, remained in sturdy keeping of her throat. From the centre of the amulet sheening spalls and radiating cracks bore witness to a sudden blow, like the first stroke of a drill upon quartz. Granny lifted it tenderly, and there beneath it, just where the windpipe sinks into the bone-bound thorax for better covering than the soft and fluttering skin betraying its slightest workings, was a dark bruise the size of its crystal covering.

"Lan' sakes! The Lord be thanked!" she exclaimed, joyously. "Thar it is,—thar's the hit! The thingumy cotched it. Look, Hedge! the thingumy's cotched the bullet an' left the bruise go on. She'll come roun'. Blessed be the good Lord! She'll come roun'. Death loves a shinin' mark, but he got cotched this time. Whar is your sting, O Death? Thar's no grave yere for your victory! Whar did she get the thingumy, Hedge?"

Trembling after the tempest of his passions and forces, quivering with the tension of anxiety and tumult of emotions, starting with wondering surprise at the fractured stone and its saving wound, stirred still deeper by the knowledge that flashed upon him at seeing the treasured charm, his face colored with sudden blood-pour as he answered, "I give it to her, granny, more'n a year back. Hit's an ole Injin thingumy I found at Fightin' Rock P'int, an' give her. I didn't know she'd kep' it. Do you think she'll come roun'? Do—air you sartin she'll come roun'?"

"Sartin as the Lord is mighty an' must prevail ag'in' a crack on her windpipe thet's put her past speakin', an' sickened her, an' nigh skeered her to death's door; ez the good Book says. That leetle Injin trick you give her hez saved her life, Hedge. Hit's one uv them ole Injin love-charms I've heerd of. Cheer up, Berry; cheer up, honey dear; you'll come roun', an' you'll be Hedge's wife, an' leetle sweetheart, like you allus wuz, furder back. Cheer up an' come roun'. Be thou faithful unto death, an' I will give you life, an' a cow, an' two pigs, an' three quilts,—the new uns, jist batted,—an' a comfort, an' a churn, an' a—an' a cradle, an' a hull lot uv things fer your cabin. I'll give you all I got, an' I'll come live with you; ez the good Book says.

Lan' sakes! what am I thinkin' about? I'll give you the cabin, an' clearin', an' all thet's in it, an' I'll stay right yere an' live with you, an' no breakin' up an' scratchin' things movin', if you'll only come roun'. She's colorin', Hedge, she's colorin'! Fetch the salamony off the chimley-board. Quick! What air you standin' thar blubberin' 'bout? Don't you see we're fetchin' her roun'?"

The hum of quiet voices sounded up the pathway coming from the ravine to the cabin,—the half-awed hum that settles over Sunday throngs, that comes and goes with Sunday clothes. Now and then the shout of a child rang out in accustomed glee, in spite of comb and dress and shoe restraint, before reproving look or capturing jerk could stop its heaven-born sacrilege, or a loud guffaw from mouth more used to laugh than prayer would rouse sinful titters and weekday echoes. The folks were coming home from meeting. It was Granny Lovett's flock of children, waifs and strays, gathering to the home fold, with their hale wives or brawny husbands, and many rosy-cheeked patterns of their fair get. As the sounds came nearer, Hedge Harner grew uneasy. "They'd best not come in, granny, too many uv 'em. Hit'll maybe give Berry a set-back."

"Thet's right, Hedge. In a crowd uv counsel ther's wisdom, ef it hain't over a sick-bed; ez the good Book says. Send a couple uv the women here thet don't go to carryin' on an' bellerin' when you tell 'em 'bout it. Keep the men out; they're too bumpersome. Take the men an' git that killin' varmint; but don't fetch him here, Hedge; don't fetch his carcass here. I'll hev no sight uv him, ner no buryin' uv him from my cabin. Bury him whar he's layin', fer decent sake; but bury him light, so's the dogs kin scratch at him. Stamp the grave flat, an' kiver it with skunk-cabbage. The varmint! shootin' my Berry!"

The very sound of Berry's name softened Granny's anger. The sea of her wrath was quickly calmed by the oil of her sympathy. She crooned quietly to herself, "Poor Corner! I nussed him, an' tended his leetle back fer him, an' now he's dead. He was a cutersome baby, for all."

One look at Hedge was enough to stop the coming party and gather it into a questioning group about him. As he told his story, the wildest grief and deepest curses sounded to the ravine's slopes. Women paled, and men drove the glow of health to knotted blotches by hard-set knit of face-muscles. Children looked with big-eyed wonder, or whimpered with heads hidden in their mothers' dresses, from dread of blood and death.

"Let's go find his carcass and hang it up fer the buzzards," shouted Mose Hayes. "Them thet would shoot a woman hez no right to Christian buryin', nohow."

"Leave him stay in the Devil's Pot, where he drownded; hit's a black enough hole fer him, an' he kin never git out," growled Sing Myers, savagely, his set teeth surprising his good-natured face into fierceness.

"Let's find him, an', if he hain't dead, make sure of it. Hit's the law fer them thet hain't time to go lawin' about it; an' it's justice. Come along, Hedge," said another, with ferocity.

"No," answered Hedge, absently; "I'll not go. You fellers kin go; I've hed my sheer uv it. Granny'll need me. Don't make a fuss about the cabin, fer Berry's low,—Berry's low."

The women sat down on the path-side and wept. The men started off on the trail for Fighting Rocks, with heavy steps and knit brows, and hearts beating oppressively from dreaded purpose. A plough-line was raided from the stable, and a cow-rope from a stall, to do avenging work, even though the object of it was a corpse. Pick and spade were taken along, in case the reversal of hanging should suit the crowd's erratic will; for the work of mobs, like the play of children, is full of glaring contradictions.

No minnow ever probed the hiding-places of Big Head Fork, or pike bestirred the depths of its deepest pockets, with closer scrutiny than the searching men bent on the finding of Corner Lovett. Its rocks and holes and shallow edgings gave no sign of his whereabouts. The Devil's Pot—as the swirl was aptly called by mountain nomenclators—was searched from rocky rim to its deepest fathomings, but not a touch of aught softer than its moss and slime gave sense of human presence. Various were the surmises, and opposite the opinions, of the seekers. Marks of the deadly struggle were there,—the trodden sand, the torn-mossed rocks, the ruffled ledge where Hedge lay, the spattered drips from his clothing, the rifle's ramrod, the secret trail, all bearing testimony to the truth of what he told; but there was no more mark of the murderer's presence or escape than the bass leaves in swimming or the bird in its flight.

The party scattered on the mountain to see if possible trace could be found; but when night darkened the forests, and phantom shadows chased the men from tree-trunk and copse to refuge at Granny Lovett's cabin, they had nothing to tell of,—not even the fear of their own imaginings. That Corner Lovett was drowned, they were certain; but where his body could be, in either the depths or harbors of Big Head, was a question unsolvable, save in the medium of conjecture.

The sturdy wills and sturdier forms of girls bred to the mountain-sides are not good feeding-grounds for either disease or accident. From the time Granny Lovett had thrilled Berry's scattered pulses into rhythm by the healing prophecy, "You'll be Hedge's wife, an' leetle sweetheart, like you allus wuz furder back," and the life-currents had spread themselves stealthily over the forsaken playground of her cheeks (with proper due to the mettlesome vapor of a "salamony bottle" held unswervingly under her nose, as heroic remedy), Berry had been gaining mastery of the shock, and now sat with a poultice of "life everlastin'" bound to her fair throat, and her blue eyes glistening dreamily in the flicker of the open fire.

But she could not speak. Her merry laugh and cooing voice were silenced for many a day. The bullet that spent itself upon the oval stone had simply spread its force to bruise the tender trachea and paralyze the vocal cords. The grasp of a strangling hand could not have done its work with such rapidity, or left her at the time so near to death from shock and suffocation.

The shadow of the passing hand had thrown its chill upon all who

were there in Granny Lovett's cabin. The spirit of the drowned man seemed dampening them with its dripping vestments; even the living girl was but a rescue from the grave. Hedge Harner broke the gloom of whispers by rising and saying cheerily, "Well, folks, I must be off. Berry'll come round all right; 'cept she's got to keep quiet, 'cause she can't help it. But she'll make up fer it when she gits to talkin'. I'd like to hear her talk go when it gits loose. I must go take keer uv my property. I've settled at Fightin' P'int, an' hev my board an' washin' there, an' supper to git in the bargain. I'll be over in the mornin', granny. Good-night, Berry. Good-night, you-uns. You look skeered an' huddled, like dogged sheep in a corner."

Berry looked at him pleadingly, and motioned him to stay. Granny Lovett said indignantly, as if his going was a reproach to her hospitality, "You shan't go, Hedge. You hev got to stay yere. I reckon I kin git your supper."

"Shan't I?" repeated Hedge, laughingly, as he darted out of the door and into the blackness, cutting short the argument by escape.

CHAPTER II.

It was far from Hedge Harner's intention either to get his own supper or to give the protection of his presence to the high-hung piece of bacon at Fighting Point. Love was cumulative in Hedge. He was a sort of reservoir that held all such welling up in him, come from what source it might. One fountain was gushing when he started for Granny Lovett's at mid-day; but seeing Berry in extremity, giving, as he thought, her last kiss and heart-beat to him, saved by a badge of her constancy, telling her devotion with soul-filled eyes, and netting her truant pleasure with capturing blushes, had started another fountain, which was pouring in at rapid rate, to blend with it by intangible affinity. The float first touching high-love mark in Hedge's thoughts was the airy scheme of the morning, of coaxing Peggy Byrne to his home with "corn uv his own tendin';" and the one close after it was tender remembrance of the last kiss he gave Berry Lovett at the spring. Therefore, by the natural drift of love from the sure channel of success to the opposing one of uncertainty, Hedge was started and steered in the direction of Peggy's abode.

As he sped over the mountain to Poplar Bench, full of love, news, and importance, he was paying out a cable that had its anchor by the fireside in Granny Lovett's cabin; and Berry was the nymph he visioned watching over its holding.

The night was dark or starlight as April's shower-clouds willed it. The fire-glow through Abner Byrne's cabin door grew faint or ruddy as the changing background made its contrast felt. About the dim outlines of the chimney-top a few eccentric sparks capered as if on the verge of lunacy, and the cabin roof was as an inky ruling upon the darkness. Dogs barked, and a flock of roosting guineas sprung rattling alarm at the sound of steps intruding upon their slumbers. A figure of medium height and easy balance moved into the door-way, where,

as it stood with one arm outstretched to the resting jamb, it bore strong semblance to a human barrier swung by a single hinge. But the fire-glow was playing tricks behind the figure's back, now lighting a high-perched roll of hair or flashing a curve of neck or limb, or straying about its flitting drapery to show that the well-outlined obstruction was not flat, but round, and solid through and through. If Peggy Byrne (for she it was) had turned her face to catch the fire at its pranks, the glow would have caught her fairly with rosy cheeks and dancing eyes and pleasure showing everywhere. For she, too, had heard the coming step, but wisely gave no tongue; because rows of peeping eyes were lidded tightly in the trundle-beds, and her father snored in his rocking-chair, against all waking inconvenience.

"Be quiet, Spank," she whispered to the dog. She would have wrung each guinea's neck with right good will, if they had not ceased their clatter.

It was but a step to the rickety gate that barred the pathway to the mountain-side; yet Peggy played with time in getting there, and counted several stars with well-put-on indifference. "Why, is that you, Hedge?" she asked, with seeming innocence. "I heerd the guineas squawkin', an' thought maybe ther' wuz an owl about."

"I come a-flyin'. Like's not it wuz me they heerd," replied Hedge, laughing. "Let's see how it would feel, Peg, ef I wuz an owl an' grabbed holt uv you."

He fitted his actions to his words, and easily could have carried off his prey, without objecting scratch or ruffle, had not he been minded to stay where he was and as he was, himself in sweet captivity. Yielding as Peggy was to first attack, she soon regained her liberty. She knew Hedge Harner well enough to know that the surest way to entangle him was to loosen his every hold: so she said, with a little start and laugh, "I hain't no guinea, to be clawed an' mussed. I'll shut the gate on you, ef you don't behave."

"There you go, gittin' uppish 'bout nothin', Peggy. I wuzn't goin' to muss you ner nothin'. I don't b'lieve the biggest an' savagest owl on arth that ever lived 'ud hurt you," Hedge retorted, with loving assurance, hoping to gain permission for another trial.

Peggy Byrne was the only being before whom Hedge Harner ever checked an impulse. Like a dog looking at a forbidden morsel, he had the wish and appetite, but kept in mind the shackling look and tongue. She was an expert in the torturing science of Flirtology, well knowing when to cut and saw with airy implements and when to touch gently with alluring words, even though her school was in the mountain wilds and her subjects few as the settlers. Hedge pocketed his hands contentedly, when she sweetly asked, "Why didn't you come arlier, Hedge? I waited supper fer you fer a while. Where hev you been all day?"

It was Hedge's turn now. With the skilful cunning that could outwit the fox, or capture the wary pheasant, or entice the knowing bass from its hidden lair, he baited his words with artificial candor, and set them temptingly to speech to catch her curiosity.

"This mornin' I wuz busy movin' into my cabin at Fightin' P'int,

an' thinkin' how I'd fix her up with furbelows and frills an' hev a scrumptious time."

Peggy snapped viciously at the bait. "Fix who up?" Her each word had a sharp click.

"Why, the cabin, uv course. Did you think I meaned a girl? 'Tain't fer me to put the furbelows an' frills on them; they git 'em thar themselves, nateral-like, like the curl in a drake's tail. I'm all right fer the scrumptious time, though. An' I wuz plannin' how I'd go to work in arnest an' put in craps an' tend 'em good. Maybe I'll take a notion to take a girl thar some day, ef I kin halter one. 'Pears like the're mighty skittish."

"Maybe they hev to be when you're about, Hedge."

Peggy was edging up to the seductive decoy, though not a little flurried by her false bite and Hedge's provokingly indefinite "Maybe I'll take a notion."

"Some uv 'em; but you needn't to be, Peg. You needn't to shy off ez if you wuz afraid. I hain't got no blind halter behind me in my hand, to cotch you unbeknownst, an' slip the bit in your mouth afore you knows it, like you hev to fer a contrary hoss that won't stan' fer catchin'. You needn't to shy off."

Peggy's hands were resolutely tucked under her apron, as she leaned against the gate-post; but a foot was swinging the gate backward and forward at a speed answerable to her moods.

Hedge continued, looking up quizzically, "I'm thinkin' the P'int 'll fetch good craps, Peggy, an' I'll hev lots of posies fer—fer somebody."

Peggy laughed merrily. "Fer somebody? Air you goin' to hev a pickin'-match when the posies gits in bloom, to see who they're fer? or air you goin' roun' the kentry with a bunch uv 'em in one hand an' a hatful uv taters in t'other, to see who you kin git to hev 'em,—with you throwed in?"

Hedge felt that he had the right bait, but somehow or other he had got it on wrong. He quickly made another cast, as he edged up close. "I'll come to you first, Peggy,—afore ary a nuther un."

"Well, maybe I'll take a notion to the taters," she responded, saucily.

"An' how about me, ef I'm throwed in?" Hedge asked, a little anxiously, rather wishing that he had his bait back.

"They say you mustn't look a gift-hoss in the mouth, Hedge; but they'd hev to be bigger an' better taters than ever growed on Fightin' P'int to work you off with 'em," answered Peggy, gayly.

"I wish I wuz the all-firedest bestest an' biggest tater that ever growed, ef taters is goin' to git you. You might skin me, an' bile me, an' snip me up an' fry me, ef you wanted to," was her lover's response.

Hedge was carried away, not by the lusciousness of the imagined dish, but by the pictured delight of being owned and eaten, somehow or other, by his tormentor,—even raw.

Peggy set the guineas going again with her laugh. "How mealy an' soft you would look, Hedge,—b'iled!"

Peggy was getting the best of him, and knowledge of it worked him up for a final throw: so away went pole, line, bait, and all. "Now don't laugh at a feller, Peg. I'm in arnest. I'm goin' to fix up Fightin' P'int, an' the craps, an' the posies, an' the scrumptious times, is all fer you an' nobody else, no time, nohow, noway. I hain't goin' to ax nobody but you. I hain't goin' roun' with a bunch uv posies an' a hatful uv taters. I'm goin' to work, an' be a man, an'—no taters fer——"

"Fer who, Hedge?" She leaped fairly at the bait this time; her voice was tinged by sweet knowledge of the answer, and Hedge landed her fairly in his arms, without resisting flutter.

The gate was too old and infirm to care for lovers' vows; the clouds were scurrying too fast and high to catch the whispered words; the stars had too little time to show their twinkling merriment; and old Spank, the dog, sat soberly by with knowing looks, from having heard such things before.

Hearts that thump strong, youthful blood, at such times, have much else to do than keeping bodies warm; and April chills and April nights can often steal a march upon them. "Let's go in to the fire, Hedge. I'm cold. Hain't you?" asked Peggy, questioning for some comfort in a fellow-feeling.

"I'm warm ez a bake-oven, Peggy. I wouldn't mind standin' here this-a-way till sun-up, bein's you're noway skittish no more. I reckon it'll git warmer when the moon gits up, ef we wait a bit."

"What a contrarywise feller you air, Hedge! I mind you sayin', many's the time, thet it wuz too cold to go out fer a walk in August, when we wuz sittin' on the same bench in the cabin nigh roastin'."

"Well," retorted Hedge to her happy banter, "I'd say let's stay yere, ef it wuz Janewary an' we wuz freezin'. But let's go in, ef you're cold."

Neither breeze nor nipping air was to blame for the toss of Peggy's jetty hair and for her rosy cheeks, nor were the dying embers on the hearth at fault for the mellow light in her dark eyes, when she entered the cabin door with Hedge close at her heels.

Abner Byrne was snoring still, with his stockinged feet absorbing heat on soles commensurate with the fireplace. The rows of faces in the trundle-beds were yet asleep, but twisted from their early regularity, to mix with arms and legs in curly heaps as restlessness had wormed them.

Whoever searches for the antique will never go amiss in a West Virginia cabin. If aught of new is found, it is a stray from some burst enterprise abandoned by some unlucky owner with only legs and money enough left to get away. Here were stools of patterns pre-Adamic, in chunks of wood; chairs of such ample seat and height of back, so crooked in their home-made tortuosity, that Noah himself might have safely sat in one, even when tipsy, as he sometimes was; bedsteads in which head and foot were interchangeable, and posts severe in barked simplicity. Even the patriarchal head of Abner Byrne, and the quaint angles of his form, were fitted to the old and bric-à-brac surroundings.

The "sparking-bench," relic of many a close-seated strain upon its

massiveness, sat in a corner darkened by friendly chimney-jamb. Hedge struck for it, and comfort solid as its oaken seat, with coaxing glance at Peggy to sit thereon beside him.

But Abner Byrne waked up, which stopped Hedge on his way, just where the dim firelight showed his torn face to Peggy's questioning eyes. "Why, Hedge," she asked, in some alarm, "what is the matter with your face? Hit's all clawed up."

After the neutral point on the mountain was passed, where the attraction of Berry Lovett left off and that of Peggy Byrne began, Hedge had no longer thought of the day's events, but sped along the path between the two, with Peggy only in his mind. Since he reached his point of gravitation, his thoughts had been much more on hugs than scratches. This, and Peggy's searching gaze, confused him somewhat. Besides, he knew it to be an unpardonable sin, in the eyes of Peggy's law, to hold back news one instant beyond good chance for telling, and that she would have the whole story out of him forthwith, if it took a wordy fight and a crying-spell to get it.

Hedge Harner was at all times quick to grasp expediency. He was going to answer, "I forgot to tell you," assured of Peggy's understanding of the way time had flown; but there was her father, wide awake, looking from under his bushy eyebrows, ready to laugh the lie at him for giving such improbable reason for holding such prolific news. So that way for gaining time to cool surprise was barred. He plunged into his story, determined to keep away from obstructing snags about its prelude at the spring.

"I snagged it chasin' Corner Lovett to Fightin' Rocks. He's drownded in the Devil's Pot, fer shootin' Berry Lovett."

"What!" exclaimed Abner Byrne, in surprise. "Who drownded him?"

"Oh, Hedge!" cried Peggy at the same time, "air you hurt? air you hurt anywhere else?"

"A bit bruised on my arm, yere, an' snagged a'most all over. But 'tain't nothin', Peg," Hedge answered to her anxious appeal. "He drownded himself when I rolled into the swirl with him; an' he like to hev drownded me."

"Oh, Hedge, but I'm glad you hain't!" said Peggy, earnestly, as she carefully took hold of the wounded arm he pointed to, and gazed at it with a heart-longing to do something for it more than simple touch could do.

"What did he shoot her fer?" questioned Abner Byrne.

"I don't know," Hedge replied. "Granny told me he thought a power uv her, an' wuz pesterin' her 'cause she wouldn't hev him. I reckon her not hevin' him wuz it."

"The crooked cur!" exclaimed Abner. "He wuz allus ill an' ornery."

"An' you chased him to kill him for it, Hedge?" queried Peggy, her eyes swiftly changing from the soft pitying look of love to sparkling admiration for his bravery.

"Yes, an' I caught him in the Devil's Pot; but he went dead his own self. I didn't kill him."

"Hit's all the same," said Abner, with intense satisfaction. "He's dead, like he ought to be. Berry wuz ez nice a gal as ther' wuz in these parts. Whar did he hit her, Hedge? Rifle, I reckon. He was a master shot."

"He shot her in the throat,—jist here," replied Hedge, pointing to the spot in Peggy's fair throat, and meanwhile gaining assurance, from the touch, that he was getting along all right.

"Didn't it kill Berry, Hedge?" Tears were in her eyes, and great sympathy, as she asked.

"No," he replied, "it didn't kill her, but it made her mighty poorly,—nigh dead. Granny Lovett an' me fetched her roun'. Thet's what kep' me late a-comin', Peggy,—fetchin' her roun'. The bullet struck an Injin stone thet wuz hangin' to her neck, an' slivered it, an' glanced off. Hit's put her past speakin'; but t'other ways she's right smart ag'in. She come mighty nigh dyin' afore I carried her home."

"I'm so glad you wuzn't hurt wuss, chasin' an' cotchin' him," said Peggy, again devoting her anxious attention to his sleeved arm. "He wuz a stout man,—stout ez you,—an' he might hev killed you too. I—I wouldn't had you killed fer nothin'. Why, look here, Hedge; here's two bullet-holes through your sleeve. Air you shot? You telled me you wuzn't hurted much, an' yere's blood. Oh, Hedge, tell me, air you shot?"

Hedge's complete surprise at the discovery that there were two bullet-holes, and Peggy's anxiety, knocked down all the safeguards he had hastily erected. Bullet-holes they certainly were, that Peggy was showing him with alarm; and there was blood quite fresh; but how they got there he had not an idea to prod dull speculation with.

"Corner tried to shoot me, but I lit on him too quick fer him to git his aim. Then he tried clubbin', but I wuz hold uv his throat, an' too fur under fer strikin.' I didn't know I wuz shot. I feeled somethin' stingin' on my arm, but I reckoned it wuz only a brier er sech."

Peggy was busy unbuttoning and pushing up his sleeve, while he was speaking. There, on his arm, was the track of a ball, cutting the skin; probably the recent bending of his arm at the gate had something to do with the fresh bleeding.

Abner Byrne was an old hunter, well stored with woodcraft, which was his pride and greatest pleasure. He would rather track a deer, or help a constable run down a stranger, than have any other happiness in his little world, excepting two; these were the capture of the deer and tracking the constable himself, especially if the latter was to save some friend, or doer of a crime not quite beyond his own, if not the law's, forgiveness. Therefore he pricked up his ears at once, and bent his whole detective force to solve the mystery. "Let me look at it, Peg. Stan' away. Stir the fire a bit. Come nigher the fire, Hedge, so's I kin see good. I'll soon tell the specifications of it: I kin tell you jist how he got them two shots." Then, as Peggy quickened the fire to a blaze, he made Hedge kneel in its light, while he, from close investigation, announced discovery as he went along;

"The bullet hez went through the sleeve, clean; leastwise it hadn't hit nothin' first solid enough to smash the ball. Purty good stuff in

this shirt. Yere's the two holes over ag'in' one another. The feller thet fired thet shot wuzn't fur off. Good-sized ball,—forty-five bore rifle, I reckon; thet's the size uv Corner's rifle. Too much powder, —burned at the muzzle; yere's black off the ball. Leather patch; grease hain't melted. Arm must hev been bent. First blood hain't caked; must hev been nigh fresh when you fell in the water, fer it's spread out frum wettin'. Shot afore you fell in. Shot through the slack uv the sleeve. Now let's see your arm."

He bared Hedge's arm again, studied it carefully, and then went on: "Arm cut straight across jist above the elbow; shot must hev come frum squar in front. 'Tain't cut much, jist nipped; been done some time, bleedin' fresh. Cut pulls open wide when I straighten your arm; your arm wuz bended when you wuz shot, an' wuzn't hangin' down, nuther. Where wuz you when Corner shot Berry, Hedge?"

The old hunter's eyes shone with excitement as he rapidly traced the bullet's course and as he gave his reasons; and now, as he asked the question, Hedge Harner felt that the keen eyes were piercing into his very thoughts and prying open every concealment.

Hedge was not a liar. He could play with truth a good while, just as one plays the game of jack-straws, without shaking,—taking good care not to tumble the structure; or he could fire away at truth without hitting it, making mighty effort, like throwing a newspaper at a mark; or he could dodge about it with wonderful dexterity; but with the keen old hunter on his track he knew that he must be run smack into truth sooner or later. He decided that it was best to take refuge with the staid personage at once, unpleasant as it was, like leaping a stream when there is a certainty of falling in and getting an icy sousing: so he answered, "I wuz at the spring, jist back of Granny Lovett's on Big Head. I'd gone to git some water fer granny. You know where it is. Corner he wuz 'cross the Fork on t'other side. Berry wuz sittin' down thar by the spring, fixin' some posies fer granny. That wuz the time Corner fired."

"Did you see the flash?" Abner's eyes showed the dawn of a new light in them as he asked the question.

"No," answered Hedge, doubtfully, "but I heerd it."

"Wuzn't facin' that way," muttered the old man, while in thought. "Sittin' down?"

"Yes," answered Hedge, realizing that Abner was about to paint a circumstantial picture, if he did not furnish real data.

A gleam of merriment played in Abner's eyes as he saw Hedge's confusion. Like all of his kind, he well loved a joke; and when it lay in the direction of either his curiosity or his trailing instinct, so much the better. He questioned further. "Sittin' close?"

"Purty close. Ther' hain't much room about the spring, you mind?" Hedge gave a quick apprehensive glance at Peggy as he said this.

Peggy was standing in front of the fire, looking down upon her father with the same keen interest in her face that shone in his, without the mark of merriment. Her lips were parted. She seemed rapt in visioning the scene he was drawing out of Hedge like the

unrolling of a panorama. Her lithe form was poised in expectancy, and nerved as though there was a sudden, misty, half-dawning of what was coming, and a half-developed mind to hiss.

"I do kinder mind hevin' to set 'purty close' thar. Hit wuz away yander back when Jude Lovett wuz a gal; afore she wuz married. She wuz a purty gal; 'bout ez purty ez Berry is now. I wuz kinder sweet on her in them days, an' liked sittin' 'purty close,' jist like the fellers does nowadays, I reckon."

The old hunter's mouth closed with a suppressive pucker, leaving his long beard to shake with his laugh in silence. His face was puffed up by the enjoyment inside of him at watching Hedge's discomfiture. He saw the secret of the bullet-holes himself, but resolved to have some fun out of it; nor, with the thick-skinned hardiness of a mountaineer, did he care who suffered for it. A joke was a joke, and privileged beyond a funeral. "I hev it, Peg. I'll show you how the holes got thar in his sleeve. Come set down here 'longside uv Hedge, an' I'll show you. They can't fool me none on a trail."

Abner was jubilant; Hedge was cornered; while Peggy came with a determined bound and sat herself on the floor beside him. She gave Hedge one look that admonished him to do what he was told, then again rested her eyes in deep questioning on her father.

The old hunter arranged his tableau joyously. "Set close to her, Hedge; you can't fool me. Thet's it! Put your left arm round her neck; you've hed it thar afore, to-night, else I'm mistaken, er maybe I'm no jedge uv signs; fer yere's some cedar sprigs stickin' in Peg's back ha'r, like's on your sleeve. You got 'em comin' 'long over. You needn't color up about it, Hedge. I'd hev done it myself to ez purty a gal ez Peg when I wuz young. Thar, that arm's fixed right. Lean back ag'in' it a leetle, Peg. Thar! that's nateral. Now put this arm up, Hedge, roun' front,—like one arm wuzn't enough to hold a feller 'purty close.' Thar! stretch your neck back a leetle, Peg. Thar! that's it. Turn your face up; h'ist your chin. Thar! that's *jest* it. See now, Hedge; the holes in your sleeve air jist p'intedly right front uv the leetle saft place on Peggy's windpipe; jist whar that locket—ez Peg calls it—is a-layin' now. When Corner fired frum 'cross the Fork, that's jist how you an' Berry wuz. Them's the specifications uv it ez near ez signs kin tell. An', Hedge, hit's my opinion thet Corner wuz a-shootin' at your head 'stead of Berry's; I 'spicion thet you wuz a-kissin' her."

It was not the fire-glow that reddened Peggy Byrne's face, for her rounded features were fixed as if in ice; nor was it the fire-leap flashing back from her eyes that scorched Hedge Harner with its glitter; nor was it the loud laugh of Abner Byrne that wakened the children from their cuddles and set them upright in their beds to stare their wild astonishment; it was the fierce jealousy and anger of the outraged girl, growing as the vivid pantomime in which she played a passive part revealed its import, and the file-like squeak of grating words, as she filled the cabin with their shriek.

Leaping from the fold of the mimic embrace as though a snake were coiling about her, and pointing to the door, as if the very im-

periousness of the gesture would banish Hedge from her sight, she commanded, "Take your hat an' go. Go! Go! Go! Don't set thar lookin' at me. Go! Go to her you kin hug an' kiss an' git shot with. Go git your bucket uv water fer Granny Lovett, an' help fix posies fer her, an' hev to set close to Elderberry while you're lettin' on to do it. She's no better than she ought to be. Tell her she's a throw-away; a nasty come-across-the-fields; a deceitful creeter. Tell her I said so. I b'lieve she's done the same thing with Corner Lovett, an' he wuz jalous, an' fired at you. I wish he'd killed her. Tell her Peggy Byrne is ez good ez she is any day in the week, an' I dare her to say I hain't. An' her ole granny mustn't ever darken that door ag'in. Go tell her I hain't mean enough to stay with another girl's company, no time. Take your hat an' go."

It is one of the idiosyncrasies of love to vent its wrath on any other than the loved one. Will the loving wife fling blame upon her husband, if she can charge his faults upon his inoffending comrades? Will not the gentle maiden roused to wrath charge the hardest defence in her lover's armor, rather than pierce him through uncovered spot, and fly ruthlessly at fair foes all about her, with fierce disdain as lance at rest?

But Peggy Byrne had stirred the grain that turned the balance of Hedge Harner's mind: that grain was justice. Confused, cornered, exposed, laughed at, ordered out like a dog, feeling in his own heart the wrong done him, the injustice to Berry, he roused to her defence. Rising to his feet, he looked steadily into Peggy's flashing eyes, and firmly said, in a tone unpropped by passion, "You shan't blame Berry fer it, Peg, noway. She didn't do nothin', nohow. I won't tell her what you've said, no time. She's ez good a girl ez you air. Hit wuz me foolin' thet done it. You shan't blame Berry fer it."

This was the shawl of a matador to Peggy. Her anger had been spending itself through the gnaw love made in it; but she rallied when defence was shaken for her rival. "You're not goin' to stick up fer Berry afore me. Go tell her what I've said, if you hain't afeard. Take your hat an' go—ef—ef you wants to."

There was the tinge of a wail in the "ef you wants to." If Hedge Harner had said just then that he did not "want to," he would have had a pair of loving arms about his neck, a sobbing girl on his heart; and—who would have gone under such circumstances?

Hedge Harner was a manly fellow. When his heart was stirred it was in but one direction at a time, and now his sympathies were all with Berry. His heart was sore because his self-blame had not been a shield for Berry rather than a target for Peggy. He resolved to say no more. Then self entered his head for the first time: he was ordered to "take his hat an' go." He looked at Peggy for an instant; his chin quivered, his long eyelashes swept suddenly over his clear brown eyes, thoughts were fighting with words, and words with voice, until at last the most fitting expression came to tell of his desolation: "I've lost my hat; an' I hain't had no supper. Good-by." He dashed through the door-way and was gone.

"Hedge,—Hedge,—Hedgy,—come back! I'll git you some."

The loving cry was too late. Old Spank was yelping from being trodden on by a hurried step where he lay outside the cabin door; the guineas were letting off their night alarm at the fall of the rickety gate with crash and clatter; and Hedge Harner was speeding along the mountain-side as if Fates and Furies and all the embodiments of grief were at his heels. Headaches, heart-aches, and many other aches yield to a rapid walk in good clear mountain air. Legs, lungs, and liver active, the mind vibrates to their according tune and the clanging notes of a cracked heart but seldom mar their harmony. By the time Hedge had reached the summit of the divide between Big Head Fork and Poplar Bench, where the trail lay slanting down to Fighting Point or steep in rocky ways to Granny Lovett's cabin, grief had been left behind on the toilsome track, and the buoyancy of his youth had outstripped all his harrowing companions. He stopped at the trail's fork to think a minute. The soughing of the gusty air-puffs through the capping pines, the flits of light and shadow as the clouds played on them with the willing moonbeams, the creep of the mist along the narrow ravines, the far-down gleam of Granny Lovett's light, making an illumined funnel in the fog, and the dull red patch upon the darkness, of Abner Byrne's wide-open door-way, were the sounds and sights to touch him in his loneliness. Three strong pulls were there to draw him as to ways,—back to Peggy, down to Berry, or on to his home at Fighting Point. He stood at the neutral point, but the fairy cable anchored in Granny Lovett's still lay between him and its sweet keeper. He looked at the lonely path, and thought of his lonelier home. A light-winged sprite of thought touched him suddenly. He laughed aloud, and said, "Ther' must be somethin' in it. Hit all comes uv settlin' on Fightin' P'int, an' the fightin' hez moved in 'long with me. I'll hev to kick it out; it shan't boss me. I'll hev no jawin' back'ard an' forrid there. Gee-wuppity! wuzn't Peggy mad at—at—at—— great snakes! hit wuzn't me at all; hit wuz Berry. Here I've been worritin' 'bout hit bein' me.

"Ole Abner drawed that pictur' good. Hit were all my fault, like I said. Berry wouldn't hev told me to take my hat. Ha! ha! I told Peggy I hedn't none; 'twuzn't sassin', though: I felt mighty low down when I said that. An' I telled her I hedn't hed no supper. Hit wuzn't proud in me to say that, but—but I hed a mis'ry,—a big mis'ry,—an' that jist come in my head. Hevin' no supper's a mis'ry. I'll bet Peggy is worritin' 'bout it. Peg's good-hearted, but she's cumscratchitty. I never seed her hev sich a bad spell afore. I wouldn't keer to raise a crap uv them spells on Fightin' P'int."

Hedge looked down the tapering vista of rays to Granny Lovett's window, and settled into deep thought. Presently he said, softly, "She tried to kiss me back ag'in,—dyin'. An' she hed the little Injin trick I give her, hid away,—lovin'. *She* wouldn't hev told me to take my hat; *she* never hed a spell uv cumscratchitty with me. She wuz allus saft, an' quiet, an'—an' she tried to kiss me back ag'in."

The fairy cable was drawing him. He stretched out his arms as if to receive some loving embrace, then walked quietly down the path to where the spell-woven cord lay peacefully at its anchor.

The door of Granny Lovett's cabin was closed against the white fog-sea growing from the sweat of Big Head's rapid flow. The light from within glared through the four-paned window, to be captured close outside by leaves and stalks and pointed buds of prairie rose, which turned them into graceful forgings black as iron tracery. Here and there between conspiring log-chinks imprisoned rays escaped to scatter cautiously amid the friendly mist. By the open fireside Granny Lovett sat in her high-backed chair, sound asleep; but such was the baby habit with her that daintiest cherub might have rested in her ample lap, or nestled in her folding arms, secure from any tumble.

The rounded lines of a nine-patch quilt covering the corner bed, a snowy arm shaped by health and exercise lying in rest upon it, a wanton stray of sensuous curls over the pillow's seductive purity, a glimpse of crease and curve where chin and neck were cuddled, a face at rest, yet maddening in its sleeping whelm of ripe enchantments, like depths and colors in a saffron rose, all told that Berry's pretty self was laid there, sleeping soundly in that barren waste of life where even dreams were torpid.

Hedge opened the door quietly and entered. A peep through the window had shown him that Granny was on guard, even though she slept at her post. The claws of True Boy, Granny's dog, rattled upon the bare floor, like muffled castanets, as he danced about with joy at seeing Hedge, and sneezed, his only speech allowable when any one was sleeping. Granny's ears were trained to every noise above a baby's earliest breath. She raised her head, and, seeing who it was that roused True Boy to such unwonted demonstrations, gave that enjoining nod of caution which only tried professionals acquire, to raise intruders on their toes and awe them into humble silence, then pointed to a seat down by the fire, where she, by leaning, could enjoy his touch and lowest tones for close communion.

"I'm powerful glad you've come back, Hedge," she whispered, as he sat upon the hearth and nursed his knee for back support. "The folks hev all gone home, an' Berry's been asleep this hour an' more. I wuz feelin' kinder lonesome, thinkin'——"

"You were sound asleep, granny," whispered Hedge, interrupting her.

"Hit's no such thing. Hit's no such thing. I wuz wide awake. I hain't closed my eyes this whole blessed evenin'. I never sleep a wink when any one's ailin'. Watch an' pray fer 'em till they gits about ag'in, ez the Scripter says. That's my way uv doin'. Where hev you been, Hedge? I'm glad you've come ag'in. Hev you hed your supper? Ef you leave my cabin ag'in empty, I'll spank you, like you often needed, an'——"

"An' didn't get it," injected Hedge, as he loosened his knee-hold to pat the old lady's hand in affection's play.

Whether it was his shadow moving across her face as he stirred, or the gentle tap of a loved one's presence upon her sleeping senses,—that mystic pleasure, coming like a sweet scent upon the wind,—that opened Berry's eyes and sharpened every faculty, open they were, and from their long-lashed nests were looking at him lovingly.

Wild and careless as Hedge Harner was, manly and strong as youth's blood made him, he was yet a child in his yearning for affection. The old striped cat, rubbing out its purrs against his leg, felt good to him; the touch of Granny Lovett's hand was like the inspiring touch of Faith, and each gave glow and strength where not a little soreness rankled from Peggy's jealous wound. His hand stayed close with Granny's, as he swung his body round to rest against her knee. "Don't be hard on me to-night, granny," he said, in a low tone, as he looked up at her and smiled his sense of security. "I've hed a hard day uv it. I moved in ter Fightin' P'int this forenoon, an' it's been nothin' but fight, fight, ever since. Ef it wuzn't thet I've telled myself, sartin, thet I'd stay thar, I'd take my bit uv bacon under my arm an' move out. But I'm sot on stayin', ez the mule said when they tried to pull him out uv the corn-crib by the tail. I'm goin' to tell you all about it. Thet's what I come fer this mornin'; but things hez got all humpitty up sence then, like—like a mad cat in a brush-heap,—stickers all roun' ef a feller stays in, an' a clawin' ef he comes out."

"Go on, Hedgy dear," Granny said, tightening her clasp on his hand, and making her face more motherly by a look of assuring interest. "Go on. Your ole granny kin keep the stickers an' dogs off you yit."

Hedge moved uneasily, and pulled his feet up under him, as if bunching himself for an effort. (The soft eyes behind him grew softer still, and drenched with sympathy.)

"I've made up my mind to git a start,—git somethin' fer myself, ahead-like. I hain't a-keerin' fer it fer myself, nuther; hit's fer" (the eyes behind him brightened, and the pillow was whiter, where the quick flush of expectancy spread upward from it)—"fer——Well, ez I was sayin', I've made up my mind to git somethin' ahead fer somebody. This forenoon I'd 'bout made up my mind to ax—furder along. Me an' Peggy Byrne hez been keepin' company—sparkin' like—fer a right smart while; an' this forenoon I'd 'bout made up my mind to ax her—furder along. I keer a sight fer her, an'—an'——"

(The eyes behind him were closed tightly by lids that quivered hard lines of pain. The pillow looked soft and warm beneath the rigid set of the pale cheek.)

Granny Lovett leaned down over Hedge anxiously, and nervously fingered his hand. "Hush," she whispered. "You might waken her. Don't cast your pearls before swine, 'cept the pigs is wuth more'n the pearls; ez the good Book says. I know a pig——My Berry is—— Oh, look, Hedge! Look at Berry!"

Hedge turned quickly. Berry sat half raised, bending toward him, with one hand resting on the bed, and the other shaking with the intensity of its point at the cabin window. Her eyes were fixed upon it with the stony stare of terror; her mouth was open for a cry of fright; her bare breast was strained to sharp angles by a shriek that would not come. Hedge leaped to his feet, and wheeled to look in the direction from whence came her fright.

Close to the window, with the black leaves binding it like a maniac's wreath, was a ghastly face glaring in upon her with a frenzy not unlike

her own. It was the face of Corner Lovett, resting like a mask upon the night without, his coal-black eyes and jetty beard set out like those upon a waxen figure of a dying brigand. Hedge paled, and backed to cover Berry with his fear-nerved form. Granny Lovett strained on his gripped arm in helpless amazement. True Boy sniffed at the cabin door and howled. A horrid yell rang in and out and all about the house. Then came a crash of glass, a puff of wind. Spark-filled ashes leaped from the fireplace; the flame shook and died; the lamp went out; and into the utter darkness pierced the sharp jangle of a demon's laugh.

CHAPTER III.

WHERE for a century and a half the moon's "dark" and "full" and registering "quarters" subdivided time and made the settlers' only almanac, where the zodiac's signs controlled all acts of men and women, save those that swelled the legions under superstition's sway, the haunt of a ghost at Granny Lovett's cabin was more engrossing topic than Corner Lovett's drowning or Berry's miraculous escape.

On all the branches, juts, meadows, and divides having the taint of Big Head's waters, doors were closed and windows barred as soon as the sun laid down its setting shadows. Women went out by twos and threes in fearful company. Men hurried from their work, or fish, or hunt, to reach their log security, scared to high speed by hoot of owl or splash of frog or sudden shake of light. Children covered their heads, huddled in heaps in bed, and went to sleep because of strange comfort from one another's terror. Months passed by. The whereabouts of Corner Lovett's body was still a mystery. Fighting Rocks glowered at each other with blacker faces, as summer foliage darkened them. Big Head grew thin and shoal from summer's thirst, and muttered gloomily in knowledge of its dread secret. Fighting Point alone seemed freed from all disquietude at ghostly presence. Its apples hung in fleshy clusters; its fences showed the stalwart propping of new stakes; its briers lay in browning piles ready for flame to burn them down to ashes. The garden was gridironed by rows of thriving vegetables. A corn-field waved its glossy blades and shook its russet pompons in pride of the promise of golden ears. A patch of wheat was rocking like a billowed pond at sunrise. The cabin logs had come together, the door swung open on friendly hinges, and the roof was laid with clapboards bright and new, without a sign of difference between them. Close by, on clean bright rows, capped by blossoming potato-vines, Hedge Harner hoed with lusty strokes, entirely out of form for idleness.

The mountaineers had given Hedge a day. With horse and plough, ox, ass, and bull team, with axe, scythe, and riving frow, with hoe, spade, and shovel, hammer, saw, and plane, men came from Big Head Fork, and Jordan Creek, and all about, to give him a lifting start on Fighting Point. Women, too, came with pockets stored with seeds, and aprons filled with plants, and with nimble fingers, to poke, dig, and plant, until not a proper spot was bare or bit of gossip unrecorded.

For Hedge was a favorite everywhere; but chasing Corner Lovett to his death, facing his ghost with bravery, and, above all, boldly capturing Fighting Point in the face of litigants and courts, had stirred the natives to united praise and prompted them for once, in work, to unity of action. So they had given Hedge a day, and furbished the Point until everything contentious was wiped out. They had fixed, and built, and planted, until all was new again, even its name; for it was resolved, and confirmed by many a conglomerate oath, that it was Hedge's Point by squatter's right of eminent domain; and woe be to the man who undertook to put the sovereign from it.

Hedge had multiplied that day by earnest labor; and its happiness, by painting radiant futures on all of those days that were to come.

"I'll git her yit," he said, aloud, as he hoed with vim, drawing the mellow earth to cover the tubers deeper from the baking sun and summer's drought. "I'll git her yit. I can't make her out, though. Ever since that night that Corner skeered her she's been—I don't know how: lovin' enough lookin' at me, when I cotch her chance times thinkin' so fur away that she forgits; an' tendin' enough to me, when she sees me give a look fer anything. 'Pears like she knows afore I do what's wantin'; an' she's allus doin' somethin' fer me, quiet-like, thet I hedn't thought uv wantin' ary time. Them's signs, them's standin' signs. I guess I'll git her. She's sorrowin' 'bout somethin', an' I can't git a scald on what it's about. 'Taint 'cause she can't say nothin'; fer she don't seem like she wants to say nothin'. Ef I j'ine gittin' anyways saft, er sparkin', er feelin' like I'd give my hull pertater-patch fer jist one leetle touch uv her, she walks off slow-like, an' by an' by I'll find her keepin' in a cryin'-spell somewhar; an' then I—I'd rather hoe myself under, down yere with the taters, than tech her an' make her cry ag'in. She used to be allus laughin' an' peert ez a red-bird. When she looks smilin' at me now, I p'intedly feel like goin' an' hevin' a bawl myself. Ef she could only talk, I'd git it out uv her,—bein' a girl. I don't b'lieve she could keep it in. Girls is like conch-shell horns; ef you git your ear close 'nough to 'em, you kin hear all ther' is in 'em. The gittin' close,—that's the thing."

Hedge struck a few blows in silence; then, as if overcome by some master throw of thought, he rested his hoe upon the ground and pressed its long handle tightly to him. "She tried to kiss me back ag'in,—dyin'," he said, softly. "Thet's the juice uv it. 'Pears like I allus see her that-a-way, when I git to frettin' about her. I can't git away frum that, ner Berry can't neither. I'll git her yit."

Hedge seized the hoe-handle vigorously, and hoed a whole row before he exhausted his certainty; then the hoe came down with extra energy and stood bolt upright, like an exclamation-point, with his hands resting on top of it. "I wonder if granny told her 'bout Peggy! Granny hez been kinder cutersome uv late, an' offish. She hezn't said nothin', noway, 'bout Berry to me; an' she axes me why I don't go on keepin' company with Peggy. Peggy's a nice girl, an' I keers a sight fer her, an'—but I can't git over her tellin' me to take my hat, an' what she said 'bout Berry. She's too cumscratchitty, Peggy is. But I keers fer her yit,—more'n she does fer me."

Hedge Harner's face was comparable to a ten-second-flash light-house at all times, but now it suddenly flashed a brighter light than ever, from some unusual combustion of thought behind it. He gave the hoe an emphatic stamp in the ground, as he exclaimed, "Gee-wuts! I've got it. I've cotched the meanin' uv the frettin', an' cryin', an' walkin' off slow-like, an' lookin' at me like she'd—like she forgits she's lookin'. She's heerd me tellin' granny that night that I keered a sight fer Peggy. Them words I said jist now kinder fetched it back to me; 'I keer a sight fer her.' I'll soon straighten that out,—straight ez this hoe-hannel. I'll tell Berry all about it, fair-like, an' I'm 'spicionin' she'll try to kiss me back ag'in,—livin'. Gee-wuts! I'll git her yit."

He gave the hoe a toss in the air, and made Fighting Point ring with his rejoicing "whoop-ee!" until even the birds, used as they were to his melodious exuberance, chattered rackety surprise. An instant later they were in less confusion than Hedge, and their most confidential twitter was a pandemonium to his silence. For Granny Lovett's laugh and voice from close behind him acted like a wool-fleece in a bell, stopping the sound and encumbering the clapper.

"What on airth air you so set up about, Hedge? You're like a soundin' brass an' a tinklin' pair uv cymbals, ez the good Book sez."

Hedge turned slowly, while he collected his thoughts, as if winding up some weighty reason in himself. Surprise stopped him short, when he saw Granny standing between the potato-rows, her ruddy face in laughing twists beneath the prim rigidity of her starched sun-bonnet. Berry stood beside her, a wreath of curls shading her fair face in playful courtesy, while her well-filled hat was doing basket duty, swung by its ribbon handle from her hand.

Hedge was never long encumbered by blank embarrassment when, on chance occasions, it did lay hold of him. His spreading blush was swiftly embossed as decoration for a daring gaze at Berry, as he answered Granny's question: "I wuz thinkin' who'd help me eat my crap uv taters when they wuz done growed."

Berry turned from his gaze, with racing color coursing her cheeks, to look at Granny pleadingly on behalf of some bright vision Hedge's look had conjured up, fearing that she might banish it by some dissolving question. But Granny Lovett had had to do with men as well as babies. She knew that there were times when they were wisely left alone to bite their own rebellious fingers. She replied to Hedge warily, "You're countin' your ducks afore they come frum the river, Hedge. Hit might chance thet a snapper 'ud git some uv 'em. I'm thinkin' the girl you're waitin' fer to come 'll bile her own taters yet a bit. Berry an' me biled some fer you, an' fetched you some supper. You work too long, Hedge, atween meals; an' you git home too late. I'm afeard fer you to pass Fightin' Rocks in the night time, like you allus does, comin' to keep me an' Berry company, 'cause we're lonesome an' afeard sence the—sence the—sence Corner Lovett's ghost hez hanted us. I've prayed fer him a sight, Hedge. I've went into the corn-crib an' prayed, like the good Book means when you hain't no closet ner nothin'. I've put up many an arnest prayer fer him;

but I'm afeard he's gone to hell in spite uv me. They say his spook was out ag'in last night. Sing Myers seed it this mornin' afore big light, over to Jurdan's Creek, where he went to take up his set-net. I wuz over thar to see Mary Susan an' the young uns an' take some uv my balsam salve fer the baby, thet hez a bealin' on its finger. Sing's laid up with shakin' rheumatiz, thet seein' Corner's spook give him. He spilled his fish an' run all the way hum, an' hain't took his head frum under the bed-kivers yit. Sing says its face was the color uv a grind-stone, an' its hump wuz ten times ez big ez ever; an' it hed a tail that stuck out straight an' hed prongs to it—on the eend uv it—like a fishin'-spear. Sing Myers is sartin uv it. He wuz skeered nigh to death. I wouldn't go 'long Jurdan's Creek ner Fightin' Rock trail arter night, no, not fer—fer oodlins uv money; like the devil wanted our good Lord to take an' git down on his knees to him—unless I hed my Bible along. Nothin' kin hant you, with the word uv God in your hands, er in your dress pocket, ef your hands is full. Berry an' me minded to come over an' tell you. Don't come along Fightin' Rock trail arter sundown, Hedgy dear. Promise your ole granny you won't. I hain't afeard, myself, but I worrit about you."

Berry's lips moved as if to speak, and her throat struggled with inarticulate words; but only her beseeching eyes, and hand earnestly laid on Hedge's arm, voiced her earnest pleading.

It was pleasant to Hedge to be thus supplicated to his own safety; and, man-like, he followed a well-formulated instinct to get more of it. "I hain't afeard," he replied, stoutly. "You needn't to worry 'bout me, ary time. I never wuz afeard uv Corner, livin', ef he wuz stouter than me; an' I hain't afeard uv him now, no time."

The race of rivalling heart-steeds was over on Berry's cheeks, and the empty courses were sodden and forsaken. She glided her hand up his arm, as he raised it in defiance at Corner's shade, and pressed it gently to his side again. She scattered his half-feigned heroism with eyes more potent than ever spectre looked through; the quickened spirit of love was looking at him.

"Well, I won't, then, ef it'll be comfortin' to you, Berry."

He tried to take hold of her petitioning hand, but she quickly transferred it to Granny Lovett's waist.

"You needn't hev jerked it away like that, Berry. I wuz only wantin' to shake hands on the bargain," said Hedge, with marked discomfiture.

"A bargain's a bargain, Hedge, an' is no better fer fingerin'," interrupted Granny, protectingly, as she leaned her ample waist toward Berry, as far as her centre of gravity would permit upon such overturning things as her rocking feet. "Did you hear that Jedham's store was robbed last night, at the mouth of Jurdan's Creek? Whoever did it took a hull back load uv all sorts uv things, but mostly grub an' fishin'-tricks. Mose Hayes hed a new fishin'-spear thet he'd left there; they took it. There's a sight uv thievin' goin' on roun' yere. I'd jist p'intedly like to git my han's on the feller thet stole a hull bakin' uv bread right out uv my oven in big daylight, an' afore it was rightly browned, while me an' Berry wuz at the spring. It 'pears

like thet a egg hezn't no show, ef a hen steals her nest in the woods an' cackles about it. Some pesky feller clum my fence like a thief an' a robber an' stole a ham frum me t'other day; ez the Scripter says. I'd cast him into the bottomless—the bottomless well, an' het my washin'-kittle full uv b'ilin' water fer him to dance in, ef I hed him. Hit's a wunner to me Ole Scratch never took to b'ilin' water, 'stead uv fire, fer some people. Hit's a heap hettener."

While Granny Lovett was speaking with great earnestness, and by gesture upsetting a retributive kettle upon a be-welled thief, Hedge had suddenly grown very thoughtful, and stern lines were drawing his handsome face to hardness. At last he burst out from the tension. "I thought so. I 'spicioned it all the time. I hain't said a word about it to a livin' soul, an' you an' Berry mustn't let on to nobody, fer the hull kentry'll be up sarchin' ag'in. But I've 'spicioned it, an' I've watched. I've slipped out uv nights when you wuz sleepin'; an' —I don't mind tellin' it—I've been nigh skeered to death. I've sneaked along Fightin' Rock Trail, an' peeked into the Devil's Pot, an' laid along the bed uv Big Head, an' stood ahind trees, an' crawled under rocks, an' shook there like I had the agey; but I outstouted my skeer, an' watched every time fer to see if I could see Corner Lovett, livin' er dead. I've never seed him; but I've heerd sounds, an' seen signs, thet wuzn't them of no spook, noway. Twuzn't no forked tail thet Sing Myers seed this mornin'; hit wuz Mose Hayes's fishin'-spear, an' Corner Lovett carryin' it. I tell you, granny, Corner Lovett's a livin' man. He's a livin' man this very minute, sure's I'm standin' yere. I've been takin' keer uv you ag'in' more'n a spook."

Granny Lovett, who had "hetted" herself up to the glowing point of righteous indignation against her pitted enemy, now cooled to the ashy tint of gloomy fear; but Berry's eyes had reached a blaze of wondrous brilliancy. Her face had flushed, her listless form grown straight and firm; her lips were round and rich, and full of pleasure; her breast heaved with the short starts of questioning gladness. She snatched her hand from Granny Lovett's waist, and, bending, clasped that of Hedge in both her own.

"Air you glad, Berry?" Hedge asked, looking at her with astonishment.

The girl's color seemed to riot in the joy of its many playing-places, and to settle in a flood that crowded confession to the fore. Her chin gave the quick movement that bites off an emphatic "Yes," as she looked Hedge in the eyes and nodded the word beyond a doubt.

"Well, I never!" he exclaimed, his voice and features loosing the puzzle in his thought. It did not occur to him that this gush of happiness and gratitude sprang from knowledge of his bravery for her and loving guardianship. It rankled somewhat with his own good nature that Berry should rejoice in the living of her murderous lover and his own foe. Even the fire of jealousy lashed the thought: "Kin she care fer Corner?" Then suspicion stung him. Peggy Byrne's words, "I b'lieve she's done the same thing with Corner Lovett, an' he wuz jalous," sent the subtle venom deeper. "I don't see nothin'

to be glad about; but I reckon you hev reasons fer it thet Corner knows," he blurted out, savagely, loosing his hold from Berry's grasp.

Poor Berry! She struggled with speech, and tears, and contradicting gestures, that might mean "yes" or "no" or knotted mixture of the two. Granny, whose love was of the kind that knows no cloaking custody, forgot her well-laid plans (through love for Berry, and the open door of fright) to keep Hedge on the anxious bench of doubt, and went at once to her assistance.

"Now don't git big-head, Hedge. You ought to know better than to say sich things ez that to Berry. She hez no dealin's with sich ez Corner, an' you knows it. She's glad 'cause you've been good a-watchin' an' takin' keer uv—uv me." Granny's color came back as the mischief of the intended ending to her sentence struck her, and the quick recognition of how narrow an escape she had made from giving Hedge much-needed consolation.

"Is that it, Berry?" he asked, belittling by his humiliated look any meek-faced sheep that might have been called on for comparison.

Berry smiled, and bobbed a settling "yes," although it did not show her meaning.

Hedge rebounded from his perplexity like a ball from muddy ground. "That hain't nothin'," he said, gravely, "to what's to come. Corner's hidin' somewhere, an' watchin'. He's stealin' to keep himself goin'. He darsn't show himself. He's got to be watched ag'inst by them thet's cutersomer than himself. An' he's got to be unkivered. Abner Byrne is the man: he'd unkiver a feller ef you showed him one uv his winks. He unkivered me once, when he hed nothin' fer to guide him but two holes an' a kiss. I'll tell you 'bout it some day, Berry."

"Great nations! thet's it, Hedge, thet's it. Corner's livin' an' stealin', an' layin' things up. He's not a-layin' his treasures up in heaven; 'cause he knows he'll never git thar to git 'em. He's a-layin' em up somewhar else. Thet's jist p'intedly it. Hit wuz him thet stole my bakin' uv bread, an' a ham, an'—an' I'll see how many eggs, an' what all. Great nations, Berry! he's alive, an' thar's nobody in my cabin, an' all the pies on the dresser. Let's go home, Berry. Come along, Hedge; hit's nigh sundown. You kin quit arly fer once, an' we'll eat supper at home. Poor Corner! I wonder where he'll git hissen."

"I can't go yit a bit, granny. I'll come along arter you. I hev to take off a settin' hen, an' coob her up frum the varmints: the're plenty hereabouts."

"Well, I'll go on, Hedge, slow-like; fer I'm gittin' short-winded an' pufferty. You kin fetch Berry. Sufficient fer the day is what you kin git: you kin fetch Berry."

As Granny said this, she looked quizzically at the young couple for a sign of remonstrance. But Berry was very busy tucking in the recalcitrant paper over the contents of her hat; and Hedge was looking up intently upon something in as clear a bit of sky as ever wore deserted blue. Feeling that they should have ample time and uninterrupted discourse in order to reach a decision on matter so important,

off Granny went, with her sun-bonnet set straight for the stepping-stones at Fighting Rock Ford, its ample sideboards giving good surety to any suspicious people against all back or sidelong glances.

CHAPTER IV.

PEGGY BYRNE had often gazed long and lovingly up the mountain-side, as the sun went down, for a sight of Hedge Harner swinging down the path; but she saw him not. Often when the dogs barked and the guineas rattled she went to the cabin door and stood against the firelight, that Hedge might see her waiting for him, or, later, leaned upon the rickety gate and peered into the darkness with cheeks aglow and soft voice set to greet him lovingly; but he never came. To many a dreary sigh had old Spank listened, as he stood by her side wondering why she stayed so long and swung the gate so wearily. Again and again she said to herself, "I didn't mean nothin' ag'in' Hedge, ner Berry neither. I wuz mad, like I git so quick. I might hev knowed Hedge wuz only foolin'; fer he keers fer me, I don't keer what they say. An' I—I feel so lone without him, comin' so cheery an' lovin'. I'd give a sight to hear his 'Whoop-ee!' ag'in. He hedn't no supper, nuther; that's the wust of it. I told him to take his hat, an' he hedn't hed no supper."

Abner Byrne stayed every jovial wrinkle when the fire laughed at him, to suit his sober thoughts, and often looked askance at Peggy with eyes that told remorseful pity. It was not hard for him to trail her thoughts and settle where they rested: then would he shake his head and tell the fire, "I oughtn't to hev done it."

This particular evening, something more than usual drew Peggy toward Hedge. She had patted old Spank beyond her wont, and lingered longer over the back of her father's chair, as she parted his bushy hair into side-rows of most prodigious puffiness. She had boxed a youngster's ears because it would not let her sit in peace to think, and cuddled another in her lap to keep her company with its prattle. Her very form seemed soft, and round, and yielding to some courting thought within. Finally, she stood behind her father's chair again, its high back a resting-place, and one hand straying to his wrinkled cheek.

"I b'lieve I'll go take a leetle walk, pop; over the divide toward Fightin' Rocks. Hedge'll be comin' frum the P'int to Granny Lovett's; an'—an' I want to see him."

Abner's eyes danced to the fire, as they had not for many a day. Reaching up, he pressed the hand of his daughter close to his cheek. "Thet's right, Peg. Go make it up. I'm worritin' about it. I hedn't ought to hev done it. Your mother 'ud hev told you to hev done that long ago, ef she'd hev been livin'; but hit 'peared like I never could say that to you. Your marm was allus fer makin' it up with me; an' many's the time I've wondered at her, fer I tried her sore, chance times. I wuzn't ez innercent ez Hedge. Go make it up, Peggy. I hedn't oughter hev done it."

She took her hat down from off a hook, looked at her rosy face in

the hanging mirror, then left the cabin with buoyant step, to mount the trail. Old Spank followed after her.

Where Hedge had stood that eventful night, upon the summit of the divide, with some of his heart-strings tangled in with Peggy's and others tugging to where Berry lay, Peggy did not falter. Her love was whole, complete, and knew but one strong anchorage.

"The trail's nigh growed shet sence Hedge come 'long it," she said, as she parted the bushes to take the leaf-veiled path to Fighting Rocks. "Hit's been so long. He'll keep it open better when we make it up atween us. I'm glad I'm goin'. I oughtn't to have worrited him so long, ner worrited myself nuther. I hed big-head fer a little while. We'll make it up. I'm glad I'm goin'." Her dark eyes told the truth as well as her words. Her eager face, her hurried step, her little impatient thrusts at barring twigs and kicks at tangled creepers, were willing witnesses to her love, as down the mountain-side she went to where the creviced trail had hidden opening on to Fighting Rocks. There she stood quite screened in leafy ambuscade, listening for every sound, watching for every sign of an approach along the trail from Fighting Point, ready to leap, with love in every muscle, every heart-throb filling parted lips with kisses, and with tingling arms for warm embrace.

In front of her, but a few feet from where she stood, the narrow trail came around a sharp jut upon the glowering face of Fighting Rocks. Back of her, in the living clasp of a single tree, which wrapped its roots about it like the arms of a monstrous octopus, was a loosened boulder breaking the way at sudden angle, to turn the path to the back of it for safer foothold.

Between the two points the trail was straight; below was the battle-ground of Fighting Rocks.

A flock of frightened swallows darted across the chasm: some one was coming. Peggy could hear her heart drumming in the little crevice walled about her, and feel the hot blood deluging her cheeks.

Behind the gnarled and twisted tree, bloated as if already gorged with its stony prey, crouched Corner Lovett, whitening from the inflow to his fiery hate and love and jealousy, his huge form dwarfed to hold it hideously, and his face a registering index to every passion. He, too, saw the swallows fly and heard the coming steps. He grasped the long handle of his fishing-spear with practised hold, and raised its barbed point for deadly cast as he himself stood firm and balanced and nerved for murderous work.

But only Granny Lovett came; and as she passed where hellish brain-foam was boiling, she uttered aloud the jubilant words, "My oxen an' my fatlin's is killed; come unto the weddin'."

The swallows darted to their homes again. A weary look came over Peggy's face, soon to make way for smiling hope.

Corner Lovett lowered his spear and trembled as he unnerved himself. Suddenly a shadow fell on all about, and lightning bowled its thunder-balls among the mountain-tops to set them jarring as they rolled. A storm was coming. To those who waited, the time seemed like a night.

A clear "Whoop-ee!" sounded above the grumbling crags to swerve a fish-hawk from its course; then a laugh, and then a cheery voice in single converse speaking. Peggy knew it well, and so did Corner Lovett. Hedge Harner came around the jut, and paused upon the straitened way, as if to wait for some one following.

With all that joy, and love, and hope, could grow in eagerness, Peggy sprung from her hiding-place and threw her arms around his neck.

There was a swish, as of a passing bird, and the sharp rattle of a wooden shaft against the rock's bare side. Without a sound, her head drooped upon Hedge's breast; then, as he, wondering, clasped her in his arms from falling, she raised her face to his, and faintly said, "I come to make it up with you."

Her weight grew heavier; and as Hedge held her close, he saw that a fishing-spear had pierced her back and carried with it Death's grim victory. He raised her, kissed her, called her "Peggy, sweetheart, darling;" but if the loving words were ever heard, they were as sweet parting sounds to cheer her spirit on its way.

Horrified, grief-stricken, dazed, Hedge called wildly, "Berry! Berry!"

She stood at the jagged turn in the pathway, like a statue whose pose and features lived in fixed despair, whose heart was dead as stone. In utter hopelessness, she lifted her eyes from the tragic play of love before her, ignorant of its course or ending, seeing only her heart's wish gone forever; and as she raised them in piteous appeal to Heaven, the form of Corner Lovett stood confronting her beside the tree, staring like a demon at his awful work. Whether fearing some unseen power would rise against him for this his second bloody crime, or maddened that the spear, too quickly sped for checking, had found a shield on Hedge's heart, or whether bent on further villany, he was tearing up a stone by powerful lifts from among the roots' tight lacings.

Even with Berry's agony, love held its sway. She saw the coming danger to Hedge; the sight nerved her. In a sudden effort for his rescue her vocal cords were shocked to action; her long-stilled voice returned; she fairly screamed the warning words, "Look out, Hedge! Look out! there's Corner Lovett."

Hedge, still holding Peggy in his arms, was cramped in every sensibility. One end of the long shaft was on the ground, and the other held its deadly hold with barbed tenacity. Berry's cry roused him. Old Spank was barking furiously at the figure on the rock. Hedge saw at once that Corner from his vantage-ground was safe, while he was helpless, unless he had the spear. Yet he would not touch it; knowing that Peggy was dead, he could not bear to tear it from her.

"Git behind the p'int, Berry, quick, an' stay there," he commanded. Without a thought of who might hear it, he gave the mountaineer's call for help.

Berry did not heed his warning. With ashy face, her blue eyes flashing purpose, she quickly swung around Hedge, to stand before him on the trail; although an inch less foothold would have hurled her, mangled, torn, and dying, beneath the feet of Fighting Rocks.

"I won't git there," she said, with stout intensity; "I'm goin' to stan' right yere afore you. Corner kin kill me ef he wants to. He shan't tech you on 'count uv me. I'm no account; I'm killed a'ready."

Then for the first time she saw the shaft and traced its deadly burial. The sight sped into her brain the thought that Peggy was there to save Hedge from his lurking enemy; the stopped harpoon showed that she had saved him. *She* would save Peggy if she could, and Hedge at all risks. Seizing the spear-handle, she raised it from its leverage, placed her hand against Peggy's back, and pulled. It did not move. She seized it with both hands and pulled again. It loosened its hold so suddenly that she staggered backward to the stony verge, toppled. A strong arm caught her and drew her from her death. She did not turn to look upon her captor. A hot breath was on her neck, and the clasp was crushing. She thought that it could be no other than Corner Lovett; but, never faltering in her design to be as true and brave as Peggy in trying to save Hedge from him, she cried, "Take her behind the p'int, Hedge. Yere's the fishin'-spear. You kin throw it ez true ez Corner kin. Don't mind me. I'll keep him yere till you come back."

With her free hand, Berry placed the steel harpoon upon the path and tossed the end of it over to Hedge, against whom it fell, as he carried Peggy backward to lay her beyond the point, and then rebounded to catch on a cluster of laurel growing from strong root-hold. With face set hard in determination, and form stiffened for an effort, she braced herself across the narrow way. The steady clasp of her captor changed into a vigorous shake commanding her attention.

"What's the matter here?" asked a stern voice, sharpened by anxiety and quickened by short breathing. "I heerd you yell. What's the matter? What's the matter with Peg? Has Hedge harmed her?"

What joy to Berry! It was the voice of Abner Byrne. Quick as the lightning which at that instant stabbed the angry clouds with molten spear, she twisted in his hold to partly face him. "Turn quick, Abner," she exclaimed. "Corner's behind you with a rock. He's killed Peggy, an' he wants to kill Hedge."

Abner Byrne's arm closed again upon her, like the hawser from a lurching vessel upon its moorings. His words came quickly, coarsely mixed with all emotions: "Peggy killed? Killed my Peggy? Corner killed her? Corner's drownded. You're lyin' to save Hedge. He's killed her himself, an' you had a hand in it. I seed you hev the fishin'-spear, an' you give it to Hedge, an' telled him to throw it at me. You've killed my Peggy atween you; an' her come to make it up with Hedge. I'm minded to fling you down Fightin' Rocks, an' I'll fling Hedge arter you."

Abner's face was terrible in its anger-ridden grief. He lifted the fearless girl from her feet and held her over the rocky edge of the trail. Something in Berry's expression restrained him from letting her drop into the wild chasm below. Her eyes were not upon him; she was looking at something behind him, with an alert, absorbing watchfulness that showed him she did not hear his words or fear his threatened action.

"Look out, Hedge! he's goin' to throw! Git ahind the p'int!" she screamed, in the agony of dread for him alone.

The old hunter turned instinctively. He saw Corner Lovett standing upon a root humped over the imprisoned rock, his long, strong arms above his head, swinging for a powerful hurl of the stone in which his clutching fingers seemed to sink. Every feature and muscle was goaded into knots by strength and passion. His strained eyes were fixed upon the jut of rock behind which Hedge had taken Peggy. Abner Byrne divined his aim and purpose at once; then the truth of what Berry had told him overcame all else. Hedge Harner was coming rapidly around the angle. "Back, Hedge!" he yelled. "Go back, er you'll be rocked." He threw his weight upon Berry, and forced her down upon the pathway, out of the way of the missile, and, crawling over her, reached forward for the spear. He clutched it, raised it from its rest, and drew it toward him. He was not one second too soon. The flying stone struck the stout ash handle and shattered the end of it. That, and that alone, saved Hedge Harner. The stone went on, grazing him as it flew, to fall with crashing violence amid the ravine's bristling armament.

The sound was a signal to the old hunter: the danger from the stone was over. He had sent his knife home, when cracking ribs and deep-sinking claws told him that death was near, when in a bear's embrace; and many a time the salmon's glisten and blue pike's swirl were the only guides at which to cast his fishing-spear with never-failing aim: so the rapid bunching of events had not unhinged his wits, unnerved his arm, or scattered that keen sense grasping all going on about him. He balanced the broken weapon in his hand, as he quickly rose, and, turning, hurled it unerringly at Corner Lovett, before the echoes of the dashing stone had finished telling that the murderer's throw had missed its hateful purpose.

The misshapen trunk of the dwarfed giant reeled from the harpoon's shock. He pulled the weapon from where it had struck in his prow-like breast, and hurled it savagely at Hedge. But pain and rage outweighed his skill. It, too, clattered down to join tree-shafts and rocks, that spread the battle-ground of Fighting Rocks.

"Damn you!" he roared, "I'll have you yit, whar nothin' but devils can git atween us. I'll take you to hell with me."

He staggered over the clutching roots and scrambled down by them into the walled trail that lay between the encircled rock and the rough face of the greater one beside it. Old Spank—a reasoning brute—knew him for an enemy, and darted upon him before he had reached his foothold. Corner seized him by the neck, tore out his hold, and flung him howling on the trail behind him. Abner Byrne, with vengeance setting every line of him, was clambering up the passage; and back of him was Hedge, no less determined on avengement.

Corner saw that he must fight Abner before he could reach his hated rival. He knew well the toughness of the old hunter's sinews: he felt that his own strength was powerless to grapple with them both. With an oath, he turned and fled to where the gigantic fragments in Big Head Fork befriended him with gap, and turn, and shadow, until

at last he made a plunge, and sank beneath the swirl of waters in the Devil's Pot.

Few as were the moments in which this tragic drama was played on Fighting Rock, the storm had meanwhile rolled over the mountain-crests, and now blackened ravine, rock, and sky, with blackness made the blacker by lightning slashes on its density. The wind hissed and moaned through the forest, snapped limbs, and wrestled old competitors to their final fall. It beat the leaves to frantic whirls, and lashed the waters of jolly Big Head even unto madness. Hail pelted and rain poured, with spiteful slant and cutting acrimony. It was one of those narrow, wedging storms, twin to a tornado.

Abner Byrne and Hedge stood upon a boulder's crown, halted by the elements. A little further on, old Spank was howling dismally. Abner seized Hedge by the arm and halloed in his ear, "Git back to the girls, ef you kin. Keer fer Peggy; keer fer Peggy; maybe she's livin' yit. She came to make it up with you. I follered her, worritin', thinkin' maybe I could help, er take her hum, ef she wuz sore uv heart. I heerd you yell. Go keer fer Peggy. I'm goin' to stay yere. I'll not leave his trail till I knife him. Him an' me fer it. Go keer fer Peggy; I hain't needin' you." Then, seeing that Hedge hesitated, he added, with savage decision, "Go, er I'll fling you in the branch. Him an' me fer it."

Hedge buffeted against the storm back to the spot where Peggy lay. As he groped and leaped, stumbled and ran, where lightning showed the way, his thoughts benumbed one another by rapid shock or love's embittered contest.

Under shelter of the point, Berry was sheltering Peggy from the storm. She, too, had thoughts that crossed and snarled and tangled, in hopeless misery. She wept in silence over the dead companion, with every sense alert for sound of Hedge. She pictured again and again the love-scene she had witnessed at the death, and then another, as she and Hedge had cooped the hen but now at Fighting Point. She heard him saying, in voice as tender as had uttered "sweetheart" to dead Peggy's ear, "I wish hit wuz you, Berry, thet I wuz feedin' an' coobin' fer the night, 'stead uv the ole hen."

She could not untangle the snarl: so she sat, and wept, and listened. She heard Hedge calling her, and she answered, feeling her voice throttled by the storm. A flash lit up the rocks, as Hedge knelt down beside her.

"Hev you took notice uv any sign uv livin', Berry?" he asked, anxiously.

"Hez anything happened to you, Hedge? Wuz you hurt any?" was her equally anxious questioning.

"No," he answered. "Is she—is Peggy livin'?"

"She's dead, Hedge. Oh, Hedge! I'm so grieved; but I'm so glad it hain't you. She saved your life, Hedge."

"I know it, Berry. I know it. She stood atween me an' Corner; but she never knowed it, Berry; she never knowed it. She come to make it up with me. She wuz worritin' about tellin' me to take my hat. Them wuz the last words she said: 'I've come to make it up with you.'"

The sad memory overcame Hedge entirely. He forgot everything save his Peggy and his grief; forgot even that she could not hear his loving wail. Speaking as if to her alone, he knew no check upon his honest candor; just as he thought and felt he spoke. "Oh, my God! I wish it wuz me thet hed stood atween him an' you, Peggy. I'd never hev hollered no more nor you did. Your leetle arms wuz around my neck, an' him strikin' you dead. I'd hev made it up with you, Peggy; indeed I would. Berry wuz my leetle sweetheart once, —ever sence she wore shifts; an' I wuz kissin' her at the spring, funnin'-like, when Corner shot me. I didn't mean nothin', nohow; an' he shot her too. An' then she tried to kiss me back ag'in,—dyin'. An' she's been good, an' lovin', an' comfortin'; an' I keers for her more'n—more'n a sight; she tried to kiss me back ag'in,—dyin'. But I'd hev made it up with you, Peggy, indeed I would. An' now you're gone from me,—dead! Ther's nobody keers fer me now."

There was utter desolation in his voice as he said, "Ther's nobody keers fer me now." His strong form was shaken by sobs, as he held his hat over Peggy's feet to screen them from the storm, and took the force of it himself as he sheltered her. A living hand, trembling as his own, felt its way into his; and a voice, sad as his own, said, "Yes, there is, Hedge; I keers fer you."

Already Big Head was a roaring torrent. The steep mountain-sides caught the rainfall, to pour it down by gulch and crevice from off their impenetrable solidity. The muddy waters boiled and tossed and charged against the boulders recklessly. Foot by foot, in rapid rising, the flood climbed upward. On top of a rock at the seething swirl, the Devil's Pot, Abner Byrne stood listening; and as the lightning flashed, he cursed the logs that leaped and tossed and swam to fool him with their mimicry of men escaping. Spank clawed and barked close by him. "Shut up, you fool," said Abner; "hit's nothin' but a mus'-rat seekin' shelter."

But Spank still barked and howled in anger. Abner went to him and held him from the spot toward which Spank had such enmity, to choke him into silence. The dog struggled fiercely to get back. "Hit must be somethin' more'n common," muttered Abner, as he loosed the dog to do his will. "I never seed him act this way afore. Seek him out, Spank!"

The wind sucked into the ravine, and almost blew the old hunter from the rock. Splashes of dashing water struck him staggering blows. He crouched beside the dog to shield himself.

Groans and curses, yells and shrieks, outdoing the storm in madness, came as if shouted through a trumpet close to his ear. It was Corner Lovett's voice.

A gush of air struck the old hunter's hand, as he groped toward whence it came. In his other hand, the lightning glinted from his hunting-knife, gripped for killing lunge. By the vivid glare, he saw a funnel-shaped hole scooped in the rock, and felt the air come rushing from it; he heard that with it came the sounds of one in hellish torment.

At first he was dumfounded; but memory—that stereopticon of the

past—flashed a long-storied picture on his mental screen. For an instant he, long ago, was netting fish from the black swirl below him, at that time isolated from all the stream by summer's drought, save by a trickle that sparkled over a bed of stones lying beneath the huge boulder on which he now stood. Here was a haunt for crawfish. Wading along a submerged edge, he found the runway large enough to crawl in, and opening from its roof was entrance to a pocket hollowing half the rock. When Fighting Rocks had hurled this boulder to its resting-place, its caved face had fallen downward. Standing erect, he raised himself through the hole and into quite a roomy chamber. With the picture the present situation of Corner Lovett came to him with its awful truth: he had dived into the passage-way through the water (which at ordinary times covered the cave's entrance but a little) and emerged in the upper chamber; and now the waters of Big Head, suddenly risen, and far above their wildest level, were crowding him in his den, forcing him to his death.

There was but one other opening to the chamber, and that was where old Spank was screaming his wrath, and whence Corner Lovett's bellowing groans and curses were issuing.

Abner Byrne was barred from swift-handed vengeance. Though within a few feet of the howling murderer, he was powerless to strike a blow or give him one look of blasting abhorrence. He threw himself flat upon the rock, with his mouth to the hole, and above the storm's roar shouted back his curses, taunted him with his helplessness, derided him for his failures, scourged him with bitter words, lashed him with his crimes, told him of his hell-born jealousy and of the triumph of his rival, of the grief he had laid with murderous hand upon his old heart; and now and again, as desperation unmanned him, he stabbed in the gaping orifice and gave his knife a twist, as if to make death surer in the demon's drowning agonies.

Without, the storm fought Fighting Rocks with all its weapons. Within the cave, Corner Lovett heard but the voice of Abner Byrne. Floating on the swelling waters, coming nearer and surely nearer to the roof, wounded, exhausted by his efforts, getting no hold upon the smooth interior, the words of Abner boomed on him like the doom of judgment. He dared not cry for help; he dared not pray for mercy. The water rising, still rising, the little hole was his only breathing-place; yet he thrust his arm in it to stop the accusing words.

Abner Byrne seized the protruding hand with his. Their hands closed on each other like clamped jaws, and held with crushing grip. The torrent dashed over the boulder; the Devil's Pot was full to the level; and thus, like a trapped rat, Corner Lovett died.

CHAPTER V.

THE rain ceased to fall, but the wind snarled among the crags. Trees crashed on their summits; rocks, loosened by the heavy wash, flew with leap and bound over the ravine, to scar its walls with bruise and gash; the earth trembled with anger at the lightning's taunts and

thunder's growling; Fighting Rocks were at war again. Big Head lashed and surged between them, shook its plumes of foam, and, passing, roared an angry protest.

On its chambered boulder lay Abner Byrne, stretched half senseless, gripping the dead man's hand. Old Spank stood over him, howling dismally. For an instant the battle ceased, and in the awful silence the dog's wail reached Hedge Harner's ear, where he and Berry shielded Peggy's body with their living forms. Hedge started at the sound. "Ther's somethin' the matter with Abner, Berry; his dog's a-howlin'. I must go help him. Maybe he's found Corner. Stay yere with Peggy till I come back,—ef I ever come," he added, with a sob, as he dashed away.

His wild shouts to Abner, that help was coming, echoed like unearthly calls to which the thunder-claps gave answer. Creeping, stumbling, running, he reached the point on the trail near where he had last seen him. No answer came to his wildest yells. When the lightning flashed its torch above the ravine, he saw nothing but a seething rush of water. The boulders were covered. Old Spank still howled. Once Hedge saw him standing half buried in the boiling stream. He knew that the dog had foothold; that, happen what might, he would not leave his master; Abner was somewhere in the Devil's Pot, perhaps with Corner. His anger rose at the thought. A devilish thirst for Corner's blood grew in him. If Abner was living, he should not deal Corner his death-blow; if Corner had killed Abner, it was for him, Hedge, to follow and hunt him down. He *must* reach Abner. Then wild thoughts, rapid as his heart-beats, shook his reason, and left his passion master.

No human being could cross the torrent or stem such mighty flow. "I'm comin,' Abner, I'm comin'," he shouted. "I'll do it ef I drown fer it," he muttered between his teeth.

Regardless of falls, of cut and bruise against the jagged rocks, he ran back on the trail, rounded the corner where Peggy was, leaped over her body as it lay in his path, and, like a demon of the night, flew down the footway until he reached the water's spread above the ravine where the level at the ford gave it ample runway. Without a pause he threw himself into the stream, and swam with vigorous strokes to its very centre.

The current seized him. Off and away he went, tossed, whirled, rolled, to be drawn through the gorge where Fighting Rocks wedged up the water to its greatest height; battling the torrent while he drifted, as if for life, to reach the other shore; nothing to guide him in the blackness of the night but the current's pressure as he swam against it, and blinding flashes telling more of death than sought-for haven. On he went. He felt the speed increasing madly and more tumultuous boil beneath him. He saw about him logs and drift leaping as grotesque companions. There they floated by his side; he dared not touch a stick, lest it steer him from his course, or, whirling, entangle him beyond all hope among the grinding mass.

It was well for Hedge Harner that his thews were young and practised; that his lungs were sound and spread by mountain-climb or stalk

for game; that his head was clear and his purpose never faltering. Had these things not been so, the dumb logs would have outrivalled him, and, while they floated on, he would a hundred times have sunk, to be forever more dumb than they.

Faster and faster. About him a deafening roar. On either side the caves hummed as the eddies spun within them, and the pillared rocks groaned as the waves scourged them. He was in the gorge now; the sounds told him that. He looked up as the sky lighted with a flash; Fighting Rocks seemed towering miles above him. A leafed branch struck his face. At the touch he grasped it. From his weight and impetus, it quickly swung to dash him cruelly against the creviced rocks from which it grew. Hedge knew that the other side of the water was gained. With arms almost torn from their sockets, he held fast to the branch, and while he held he rested.

Every foot of the rocks was known to Hedge. He soon determined his exact position. To further help him, he faintly heard, not far below, old Spank still howling. He must not loiter there. He had gained his point; the rest was easy now. If he could keep himself from being dashed against the rocky side, he had but to drop with the current until he passed between it and the boulder; then the swirl in the Devil's Pot would catch him, and he could reach the rock where old Spank stood.

He loosened his hold. Again the current swiftly bore him, feet foremost, with fearful rapidity. With every sense of touch alert, he kept clear of jutting rocks and cutting angles. At last he felt himself whirled as if upon a gigantic millstone: he was in the swirl, he was riding the mad waters of the Devil's Pot. He struggled fiercely to reach its rim, round and round, time after time, the maelstrom drawing him to its centre, each desperate stroke fighting its power. Then came a sudden shock; his body bounded out of the water from the force, to fall, bruised and bleeding, across the body of Abner Byrne, lying in the swash of angry waves upon the boulder's summit.

For a moment Hedge lay stunned, panting, half unconscious. Old Spank licked his face and ceased his howls to utter joyful barks. Hedge quickly recovered his senses, but not so quickly were his bruised limbs brought to action. He felt along the body beneath him, until its lines told him it was Abner Byrne. He put his hand upon his face; against its icy coldness he felt a flow of warmth: it was blood. "Great God!" he muttered, horror-stricken; "hez Corner killed him?"

Tottering to his feet, fearing that he might slip, or in the inky blackness step backward into the swirl, Hedge tried to raise the prostrate form. It clung to the rock immovably. "Abner," he shouted, "air you dead? Hez Corner killed you? Tell me, where is he? Is he livin'?"

A groan from Abner was his only answer; but the dreary sound was welcome.

"Abner," he shouted in his ear, "it's me. It's me; it's Hedge. Come to! come to! I'm yere to help you. Come to." Hedge shook him roughly: "Come to, Abner. Where's Corner?"

A passing log had reared its end above the rock as the current

tossed it, and, lowering, knocked Abner senseless as it fell. The name of Corner roused him. Hunter-like, his first thought was of his prey. For an instant his anger barred his words; then out they broke. "I hev him, the varmint! I hev him! I held him fast till he drownded, —drownded like a rat in a hole. I hev his death-grip, an' I'll hold on to all eternity. Jab down the hole with somethin', Hedge: maybe he hain't dead yit."

The black body of the storm rolled away with mutterings deep and vengeful. As it went, the stars looked gladly down to earth once more. By their faint light, Hedge saw what stirred his brain to wonder. He had thought Abner raving; but now he saw what seemed to him a miracle,—Abner's arm was buried in the solid rock.

With all his might he seized him around the chest, and, setting every muscle to the task, he pulled. But Abner stirred not. He pulled again; still, to his astonishment, the rock held fast. "Let go. Let go, I say," growled Abner, as might a dog drawn backward from a bone. "I hev him, an' I'll hold him. He's mine. Let go, I say." In vain he cursed and raved. What held him was a mystery to Hedge. How could he know the secret of the rock, or picture the hideous grip that held the living to the dead? At last he tore him loose.

The old hunter's wrath was as that of a devil. He grappled Hedge as a bear would seize its victim. Nothing but Hedge's youth and vigor saved him from being hurled to war again with the rabid torrent. During the desperate struggle, nothing but his quick eye and solid footing saved Abner from the treacherous edge that would have launched them both to death. Exhausted, blown, with reason edging into Abner's mind, they sank upon the rock. There, when calmer moments came, Abner told Hedge of the horrid death beneath them.

The two were prisoners. Until the water fell, no one could leave the rock and live. The story told, they sat in awe-struck silence, about them the rush and roar, beneath them the dead.

Up on the trail, a lone watcher sat sobbing and waiting, now eying the whitened face of Peggy Byrne upturned to the starlight's pallor, now listening in the agony of fear, now trembling at a sound. She had seen Hedge dart past her, his errand unknown: she had nothing to do but sit by the dead and wait.

CHAPTER VI.

GRANNY LOVETT was so overjoyed and filled with exhilarating visions of "oxen an' fatlin's, an' comin' unto the weddin'," that, though the first heavy water pellets of the storm struck her as she entered her cabin yard, she halted in her hurried walk to bow to an imaginary partner, pick up her skirts, and execute upon the sanded walk a "cut of the pigeon-wing" as lightly as if rocking babies had not turned her toes or years put weights upon her heels. Her exuberance was but fairly started to its outlet in dance, when a rich, merry voice brought her to a sudden stand-still and fixed her in puffing astonishment.

"Well done, old lady! I used to do that myself. Come in out of the rain, and we'll finish the dance on the cabin floor. You see I have taken possession."

The speaker was a man of fine physique. His uncovered head touched the lintel of the cabin door, and his well-knit form commanded its entrance. He was fifty or thereabouts,—the maturing of years told that in his face and figure; but no score-marks were there to tell Time's tale upon him. An open, jolly, careless, handsome face it was that Granny Lovett stared into; one to win confidence and make it captive to its power.

With her dress still up, and leg poised for its next fling, Granny ejaculated, as if the force of the down-coming foot was expending itself in words, "Great nations, stranger, how you skeered me! I—I wuzn't dancin'; I wuz jist steppin' over the wet grass."

"On the dry walk, granny?" he asked, with a laugh.

"Well," answered Granny, with some confusion, and dropping her skirts, "hit's gittin' dark, an'—an' I——"

The ludicrousness of the situation was too much for one of her explosive nature. She laughed merrily: "You cotched me, stranger. I hain't done it fer twenty year,—cut a pigeon-wing. I wuz foolin' like a gal ag'in, at seein' my last pair like to git married. I don't reckon you could beat me dancin' yit, if I wuz laced up an' felt frisky an' the fiddlin' wuz good."

It suddenly occurred to Granny that she had ownership in the cabin, and that she was outside of it talking to a man she had never seen before. Her dignity and hospitality asserted themselves about the same time. "What air you doin' in my cabin, stranger? Oh, I mind: I wuz away frum home, an' night an' a storm comin' on. Come in. You're right welcome. Take a cheer."

The stranger laughed heartily. In an instant Granny joined him. "I will let you in, granny. At present you are outside. Then I will thank you for your hospitable welcome. I was told to seek your home, as a good place to stay for a few days while I attend to some business I have on hand in this neighborhood. I arrived here a few moments ago, and, seeing the storm coming, I unceremoniously stabled my horse and took possession of your place. My name is James Hardy,—Major Hardy. Now I will let you in, if you promise to take care of me."

The laugh, the ease of the stranger, Granny's love of company, the joy in her heart, all joined in wording her outburst: "My oxen an' my fatlin's is killed; you're a leetle too soon; but stay unto the weddin'; ez the Scripter says. I'll keer fer you. Now let me in, till I git you a bite uv somethin' to eat. An empty stomach is a soundin' brass an' a tinklin' cymbal, ez the Book says."

Granny had hardly started the blaze from its red lair among the embers before the storm broke in fury about the cabin. The wind swept down the chimney to scatter the white ash-flakes on purposeless wanderings. A dazed bird flew in through the door-way, and the candle went out. Granny stood alarmed at these omens. A flash of lightning, a peal of thunder, and Granny fairly shrieked her alarm.

"Stranger, bad luck's comin'! maybe death! It's comin'! Look at the bird an' the candle—them two together;—it's death thet's comin' to my house! Maybe it's Corner! Maybe it's Hedge! Maybe it's Berry! Come 'long! Come 'long! They're out in the storm,—Hedge an' Berry! Corner's livin'! Come 'long! Death's comin'!" She jerked the tin lantern from its hook, hurriedly blew up a coal until she lighted its candle, and, shouting, "Come 'long!" rushed out into the storm.

Major Hardy had looked death in the face on many a battle-field. He was not excitedly impressed by Granny's prophecy of its approach now; nor was he at any time, by omens less formidable than whistling balls and shrieking shells. He coolly took from his saddle-pockets a flask and revolver, then followed Granny, guided by the yellow speck of lantern-light. He soon overtook her. He could not but wonder what fear possessed her; for while he had heard much about her from the garrulous natives directing him to her cabin, he knew nothing of her household or its closeted skeleton. He followed simply because there was a woman ahead of him, alone in the night.

Granny Lovett set her prow to the storm fearlessly as when on that morning, a score and more of years ago, she had set it to the fog from out which came the infant wail of him for whom, now, she would give her life. As she mounted the narrow foot-way over Fighting Rocks, a circled patch of light from her lantern travelled against the solid side, and yellow rays, wide parted by her form, were tossed from Big Head's muddy crests to perish in the gloom beyond.

The crash of drift, the groan of cavern, the roar of waters, the wild cry of night-birds, the unrecognized shout of Hedge, had no terrors for Granny: she was seeking her loved ones.

At last the lantern's yellow gleam fell upon the crouching form of Berry, and turned to gold, as if by Midas's touch, the upturned face of Peggy Byrne. The chiselled lines, she knew too well, were from the master hand of Death. The lantern fell from her hand, and would have jingled down the ravine's side, had not Major Hardy caught it. Even he—cool man that he was—was startled at the sight. Some spell came over him. "Is the old woman right?" he asked himself. "Has Death come as she said?"

He held the lantern close to the dead girl's face. Its light roused Berry. She turned to look from whence it came; in its full rays her face was turned to Major Hardy. "Great God!" he exclaimed, in dazed astonishment; "Belle, you here?"

He stooped closer, and held the lantern full before her dazzled eyes, then lowered it. It trembled in his hand. "What folly!" he muttered. "I saw Belle buried."

As if mocking him, the voice of Granny Lovett echoed, "Berry, you here?" Granny was almost crushing Berry with weight and hugs. "Berry," she called, "Berry, what is it? Who did it? There's nothin' the matter with you, is there, honey? Whar's Hedge? How did Peggy come yere? Who killed her? Whar's Corner? Berry, Berry, honey, make a sign. It's me,—granny. Make a sign, honey. Major Hardy's yere; he'll help."

If the voice of the dead had sounded, Granny Lovett could not have been more surprised than to hear Berry speak aloud in answer. "Corner killed her. He meant to kill Hedge, an' killed Peggy. She'd come to make it up with him, an' they wuz makin' it up. Corner killed her. I wish he'd killed me."

No sadder moan ever lay over Big Head's waters than Berry's "I wish he'd killed me."

"Where is this murderer? Where is this Corner?" asked Major Hardy, in a tone that brought both women to its commanding presence.

"I don't know," answered Berry. "Abner is after him, and Hedge is after Abner. They're both gone. Hedge left me; an' then he come flyin' back an' left me ag'in. He told me to keer fer Peggy till he come back; an' I'm keerin' fer her. She come to make it up with him."

As Berry stared into Major Hardy's face, answering his question as would an automaton, he saw the weighting of another grief than that for the dead before her. Such love as he poured from his eyes, for an instant, would have brought the blush to any maiden's cheek. He put his arm around her and raised her gently to her feet. "Come," he said; "take the lantern. Lead the way to the cabin; I will follow you. Poor girl! Poor girl! Granny, you take hold of her. I will follow."

"Hedge told me to stay yere an' keer fer Peggy," said Berry, firmly.

"Go with Granny, Berry. I will take care of this poor girl," replied Major Hardy. He turned her lovingly on the pathway, saw that Granny was holding her in careful guard, and forced her quietly to onward steps. As they went away, he gathered the body of Peggy in his arms and followed.

What a night! What a scene! What a tragedy! What memories surged his thoughts as he bore the dead girl along! He took no thought of her, save that unconsciously springing toward tenderness for the dead. He saw himself the rollicking captain of cavalry of many years ago; he saw a log-cabin girl of these same mountains, with a face trusting, beautiful, upturned to his own. He felt a good-by kiss. He thought of many a night ride, and fight, and skirmish; of stolen rides to see his love; of a young mother; then of a wild crazy tale brought to him by a mountaineer of a missing baby; of a dead loved one; then ride, ride, ride to be at the burying. As the clods dropped on a coffin, a riderless horse stood panting; himself stood sobbing by a grave: and then again a gathering of reins; a dash with grief, despair, remorse, as riding squadron, to where command awaited him and war's black curtain hung behind each day to bar it from the past. Death—so used to death in all those years, that one, even hers, was dimmed in his memory by the grim drapery of the carnival. Here in this fearful night, the face he loved away in the past turned up to him in the dim lantern-light on these same mountains, and shook the veil of his life away since that last parting, to show him her eyes again. "Belle," he had exclaimed, and, as if by magic touch, his heart sprang

to loving beats, his years fell off, and he stood again beside the one he loved, to love again for evermore.

When tens of thousands go down in battle to nameless graves and are forgotten, surely the memory of a loved one may be sodded by events. To Major Hardy's memory, a Gabriel had sounded trumpet, and now was resurrection come.

As he laid his lifeless burden down in Granny Lovett's cabin, and turned to take Berry in his charge, that Granny might be relieved to do all her goodness called for, he felt the raising of an old love, that, in a calm and holy way, hovered about the form he gathered to him.

Berry was of the mobile sort. Her clay, charmingly moulded, responded to a touch; and, like the flash that gave to Galatea life, it made tingle a responsive welcome to hand that wished it for its own.

She was an innocent mountain-girl; as nature made her, so she was. The closing arm of Major Hardy about her, as he took her from Granny Lovett, was as warm as Hedge's when he kissed her at the spring, simply because in its presence was a sympathy that fed her and filled her with contentment. Why she laid her head on his shoulder, why she sat in his lap and sobbed, why she felt the comfort of it, and thought of Hedge, she knew no more of than you or I do of why we do a thousand things: she did it. Granny saw in Major Hardy's act but the single purpose of kindness actuating a kind heart like her own. Major Hardy saw in it the outcome of some propulsive power he could not then resist.

CHAPTER VII.

BERRY told her story to Major Hardy in a broken-hearted way. She had seen the lovers clasped in each other's arms; she had listened to the story of their love; she had heard the piteous pleading of Hedge that Peggy might hear him. His promise to the dead one, "I'd hev made it up with you, Peggy, indeed I would," had not roused jealousy with its supporting pain in Berry, but had shattered all hope in her and left her helpless, deadened by the knowledge that Hedge loved Peggy better than herself. She told the story as though her tongue was pen to her every thought and wrote with her heart's blood.

Major Hardy did not interrupt her with a word. He looked into her eyes as if listening to a tale of long ago; such eyes as had once looked into his, and such a tale of love and woe as might have been told to him had he been where a voice so much like hers could have so sadly doled out a grief. Tears ran from his eyes to wet the parched cheeks of one too grieved to weep.

He was lost to all about him. As Berry told her tale, his thoughts wandered backward along the chain of years, and so did her face and voice and tale impress him that he drew her closer to himself, stroked her hair, laid his cheek against her own; and, with the strong eagerness of a man's full love, he cried, "Forgive me, Belle! oh, forgive me! I did not mean to break your heart. I love you, my little

mountain girl. I could not come to you; I was not my own master; I was off on a raid, fighting in the front. Look up and love me, pet."

The pole-rafters of Granny Lovett's cabin had vibrated to many a laugh, and shout, and solemn teaching, but never before from her voice in anger raised. She stood over the conscience-stricken man like a summoning spirit pointing him hellward. Her hand clutched in his hair and hoisted his head with a powerful lift. Her words rattled among the clapboards of the roof. "What are you doin'? Makin' love to my Berry? Sparkin' her right afore my eyes, right where the dead is layin'? My Berry, heart-broken, an' thinkin' you wuz comfortin' her, an' nestlin' to you fer comfort! Tellin' her sich stuff ez that! Tellin' her you love her! Axin' her to fo'give you! Huggin' her! Git out uv my cabin! Take your hat an' go! I'll chuck your saddle-pockets arter you. Git your critter! Go! er I'll grate your sneakin' face ag'in' the chimbley corner. Ef you'd been a belated skunk, I'd hev took you in out uv the storm an' keered fer you; but you're a livin' sarpint. You're an' ornery, unyoked pig. Git up an' go!"

To be snatched from a dream by the hair brings one to a sudden realization of corporal responsibilities. Major Hardy was one of the coolest of the cool. While he hung in Granny's angry finger-hooks, he did not move his arms from about Berry, who, startled, sat upright in his lap. As Granny rattled her indignation at him, he quietly turned his face and looked up at her. The light of the lantern glinted from his tears. No shame or love-caught sheepishness was there, but the gaze of a man—a noble man—stricken with sorrow, filled with some high purpose.

Granny, not accustomed to maintain such sublimity of wrath, wilted to her home level—compassion—at the sight of his face. She dropped her hand to his shoulder, and asked, with kindly lean toward him, "What air you cryin' fer, stranger?"

To be told of tears, such tears, was bracing to every bit of manliness in Major Hardy. The flush of honest candor spread over his face. He did not raise a hand to stir these jewels of his soul. They stood there, shining steadily, as vouchers for his heart and truth of tongue. "What am I crying for?" he repeated after Granny, while Berry looked wonderingly on. "For forgiveness,—forgiveness from one I loved long ago, that I thought was dead. I was thinking of her. This girl is so like that sweet girl whom I loved. I was talking to the dead one, not this living one. Tell me, who is this girl?"

"I—I don't know," answered Granny, as though the words were ordered out of her. "I finded her in the elderberry-bushes, down by Sank Roberts's cabin, on Jurdan's Creek, nigh dead, when the elderberries wuz in blossom. I named her Elderberry fer short, an' I fotched her up, an' a power of comfort she's been to me,—a power. An' my oxen an' my fatlin's wuz just a-goin' to be killed, an' people goin' to be axed to the weddin', ez the Scripter says, when trouble come on,—ter'ble trouble,—an'——"

Major Hardy interrupted her. His eyes glistened with a light far beyond and above the magnifying power of tear-flow. Joy and cer-

tainty, with the piercing sparkle of inquiry, gave them brilliancy as he asked, "Granny, did you know Belle Riley?"

For a second Granny looked at him in blank wonderment; then her eyes shifted to Berry's face, where they rested until her close scrutiny seemed to breed an answer and dam some impulse that sent all its crowding energy to paint astonishment on her face. "Great nations!" she blurted out; "sich a—sich a—I never wuz sich a blind-haltered ole mule afore in my life. Them thet hez eyes to see, let them see,—ef ther's anything wuth seein', ez the good Book says. I never! I never——Great nations, stranger; why, Berry's the very picter uv Belle Riley; an' Belle's baby a-missin', too; an' her crazy, an' dyin' broken-hearted, they say, an' we never took notice uv it afore. Poor girl! Poor girl! Poor purty girl! I couldn't git to the funeral, 'cause uv a ragler I wuz tendin' 'bout that time; but I heerd say thar wuz a big soldier at the buryin' that took it hard. Belle Riley wuz the lovin'est creetur I ever knowed, 'cept Berry. She'd hev come to good, ef she hedn't uv died. The big man—high-up officer, with a captain's marks on his shoulders—they tell me 'ud hev taken keer uv her, he would. He wouldn't hev been thar a-takin' on so, ef he hedn't been a feelin' man. I mind one day I wuz passin' by where poor Belle lays buried, an' I hed a han'ful of wild posies thet I wuz carryin' to poor Millie Acres,—Bob's wife,—Bob's young widder; an' I rested a bit whar Belle wuz a-layin'. Poor, poor Belle! An' I sez to myself like, 'Yere's a poor woman that never hed a husband to mourn fer her, ner no one to pity her;' so I ups an' puts the posies down on her grave. But I gethered another bunch fer Millie."

Granny's story was cut short by the muffle of a strong embrace; Major Hardy's arms were about her; and such was the suddenness of it that it, and his words, fixed her unspeakable for a while.

"God bless you! God bless you! I thank you, granny. Belle Riley was my wife."

Granny Lovett was not of the jerky sort. She was too well poised by habit, experience, and matronage to be startled by an embrace. Many a time a new father had hugged her in his exuberance of joy; often had grief-stricken men sought consolation in her ample waist and pillowing shoulders, when consolation was most wanting; and further be it said that when the jollity of wedding, infare, or picnic broke down the barriers of propriety, she was not the first one to start coquettishly from an irresponsible arm. The heart-felt "God bless you!" of Major Hardy fastened her in flattering comfort, and his confession stayed her immovable.

When she gently broke away, it was to take both of his hands in her own, and say, with feeling fresh from her dear old mother-leavened heart, "Then you're the big soldier that took it so hard at the buryin'. I allus said that you wuz a feelin' man. I'm powerful glad that Belle Riley wuz a widder with a husband. She wuz allus the lovin'est creetur I ever seed, 'cept Berry. Berry! Why, great nations, Major Hardy! why, Berry—Berry is—yes, she's Belle Riley over ag'in. I didn't took no notice uv it afore. Why, Berry is the missin'——"

Quick as flash, Major Hardy loosened his hand from Granny Lovett's clasp and clapped it over her mouth. "Not yet, not yet," he said, in a low tone. "Keep quiet; it is best. Let me take my own time to tell it. I feel that it is so, but this is no time for explanations. Promise me, in the presence of the dead; I have good reasons." He removed his hand from her mouth. Following it, drawn by the solemn adjuration, came Granny's promise, "I will."

The major turned to Berry. Where he had flung her from his lap to speak his gratitude to Granny, she stood as one shocked to waking from sleep in the sunlight; the sun was there, but the comfort of it was gone. A chill crept over her when she saw the major and Granny in close embrace. She looked away from them and into the fire flickering on the hearth. She saw again the love-scene on the trail, and heard the words that were burning themselves as an eternal text upon her brain: "I'd hev made it up with you, Peggy." He put his arms about her; she yielded passively, and he drew her down upon his lap. Lower and lower went her head; and as the fire on the hearth crept among the branches Granny placed there, the light shone like meshed gold in her hair, and showed, too, the depth of shadow brown curls could make when laid beside it.

Against the cabin logs the shadowed portrait of dead Peggy lay; and broader against the wooden wall spread Granny Lovett's silhouette.

Outside, the stars were wondering. As if the lightning's glare had scared them, they peeped from drifting clouds and ventured timidly to shine once more. The storm-wind had hurried on, but faint breezes were lagging in its rear as followers might to an army gone before. Big Head was humming a careless tune among its boulders, to drive shame for its wrath away. Like other torrents of its kind, it fell as rapidly as it rose. As soon as safety warranted, Abner and Hedge plunged into its current and reached the foot-way shore. They clambered up the rocks and hurried to where, hours before, they had left all they held most dear. The spot was deserted.

"Hedge," exclaimed Abner, joyfully, "she's livin' yit, an' Berry hez taken her home."

"No, Abner," Hedge responded, sadly, "she's dead. Granny come, an' some one 'long with her, an' they've took her to granny's cabin. I saw the light bobbin', an the long shadder uv a man ag'in' the rocks. Let's go see."

"Hit's a lie," said Abner, savagely. "They hain't. My Peggy hain't dead. You're no good on a trail."

Hedge answered him coaxingly: "Come on. Ef she hain't thar, then we'll go find her. It's hard fer you an' me to think, Abner; but I know she's thar. Come 'long."

The old hunter yielded. Hedge steadied him down the path, took his arm in slippery places, and, bearing his outbursts of rage for proffered and given help, guided him to where the eye of Granny Lovett's shelter blinked upon the night. Hedge entered first. Granny was sitting upright by Peggy's side; Berry was in the lap of a stranger to him, who held her tightly clasped. While Abner tottered across the floor, Hedge stood as one stung to the death.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE storm had not shaken the region around Fighting Rocks as did the news of Peggy Byrne's tragic death and Corner Lovett's drowning. As the news spread in the morning, cabins were deserted, and the mountain-paths were black with ant-like trains of men, women, and children hastening to the bloody spot. Men swarmed over the boulder at the Devil's Pot, still submerged above its opening, and stared, as though to pierce its solid covering. Savage mutterings and loud curses were the requiem for the dead within it.

Numerous were the propositions made to reach the murderer's body. Even though they knew him to be dead, men clamored for vengeance more complete. Had not Big Head kindly sheltered him, his members would have strewn the mountain-side for dogs to gnaw and buzzards to peck at. A mighty gathering of stalwart men was there. Some proposed to split the rock with powder; others to overturn it. But passion ran high, and these plans would take time. They could not wait. A boy, to vent his wrath, fired a stone viciously into the Pool; others followed his lead; and soon the cry arose, "Let's fill the Devil's Pot, and shut him in forever."

Hats flew off; coats were thrown to the ground; stones were grabbed and flung, boulders loosened and tumbled; men worked as they had never worked before; and with each mass sent splashing into the swirl went wicked epitaph in curse or gibe to hover round the murderer's sepulchre.

Women raised the wail in and around Granny Lovett's cabin. Here the cries were born of grief and love and pity for Peggy Byrne. Hundreds of willing hands were stretched to do some tender duty; every tongue had words for praise alone, and every eye was moist with sympathy.

Abner Byrne, hardy and knotted as he was to bear against all sorts of wind and weather, could not recover from the shock. Weak and broken, he sat by his daughter's side, moaning over and over, "It were all my fault; it were all my fault. I trailed Hedge too close—fer fun—right afore her eyes; an' she told him to take his hat. Ef her mother had been livin', hit wouldn't hev happened. It were all my fault. She wuz goin' to make it up with him, an' got killed."

Hedge was as one stunned for life. The touch of Berry's hand, the tenderness of her voice, did not waken in him a single answering throb. Granny's beseeching whisper to him, as he sat glaring at the bed where Peggy lay, "Hedge, Hedgy dear, 'tain't no use mournin' so. Hit wuzn't your fault," roused no look of comfort in him.

Of all those present, Major Hardy alone had grasp upon his faculties. Berry was moved by that sublimity of womanhood which braves all and dares all for the man she loves. Her whole care was for Hedge; yet so did the miraculous coming of her voice impress the people there that questionings and superstitious whisperings blocked her way to every public act.

A stranger to the key of incidents, Major Hardy had to guess his way. Naturally a commander, he took command. When he touched

Abner Byrne on the shoulder, the old hunter felt authority in it. He rose and followed the major out of the cabin. Out by the wood-pile the man stood bent before him.

"Abner," said the major, "I will take charge now. What do you want done with Peggy?"

The answer came quick and prompt. "Put her 'long-side uv her mother; an' when I hain't livin', tell 'em to put me thar too. The time won't be long. Ther's no preacher handy to these parts: maybe you'll read a chapter. I want my Peggy buried decent."

"I will," replied Major Hardy.

The answer roused Abner to look in his face. "Thank'ee, stranger," he said. "You take keer uv things: you're a feelin' man."

Major Hardy beckoned to a group of men who stood near eying them, and, addressing them, said, "Make a stretcher, and carry her over to her father's cabin. Dig a grave alongside of her mother. When it is ready we will bury her."

It needed but a start to get order out of the confused mass waiting to do something. No sooner was the direction issued than all stray purposes were gathered to one object, the burying of the dead girl.

How kindly hands plied themselves need not be told. Before the jewelled dew was off the grass and the wind had shaken the last raindrops from their settings on the rose-leaves swinging about the door, the funeral train came out of Granny Lovett's cabin.

On crossed sticks from the wood-pile, withed together with twisted hickories, borne on the shoulders of men, rested the shapely form of Peggy Byrne. About it crowded men, women, children, raising a coranach, making Big Head's ravines wild with mournful echoes. When the last mourner had departed, Major Hardy stood in the door. He seemed divided in purpose: his hat was on his head, he was ready to follow; a backward look seemed to hold him to Hedge. No eyes were upon him; all were on the rude bier borne aloft and rising on the mountain pathway. Overmastered by sympathy, he went to where Hedge sat by the fireplace. Laying his hand on his shoulder, he asked, "Are you not going along?"

In answer to the kindly voice, Hedge rose and stood beside his questioner. There were no eyes to look at them; but, save for the difference in years, no eyes, had they been there, could have told the difference between them. The clean-cut faces, the transparency of skin, the eyes, the hair, the reckless jollity that even grief could not eradicate,—a laugh seemed breaking out of woe on each of their faces,—they were counterparts except in years.

With strong prompting to do a kindness, Major Hardy looked compassionately into his companion's face. As in a mirror he saw himself. The sight startled him. "My God!" he inwardly ejaculated, "are these mountains full of ghosts? Am I everywhere to see reminders of that time?"

The feeling that bent him to Berry now warmed him beyond compassion, and prompted a more than kindly interest in this youth. He took him by the arm and quietly urged him to the cabin door. For the first time Hedge seemed to comprehend the situation. He looked

at the departing crowd clustering about the bier, and realized that his Peggy was gone.

"Stranger," he said, "I hain't goin' along. I'm sort of blinded. Take me up to Fightin' Rocks; that's whar she come to make it up with me. That's whar my buryin' uv her is."

One desolation revived thoughts of another. Out of his deadening sorrow a wicked gleam sprang to his eyes. He shook off the hold of Major Hardy, and, glaring defiantly at him, asked, "What wuz you doin' with Berry in your lap when I come in last night?"

The question was a puzzling one. The incident was by no means forgotten. That which grounded the major's action had its foundation down in some strange depth of his nature, unfathomable, inexplicable. He could not tell this savage mountaineer why. He was not certain of the why, himself. Berry was to him Belle, his love, his wife, in the dreaminess reaching back through years; yet no certainty of else than likeness, dream, and loving instinct fastened him to her. What should he answer?

A good old subterfuge came into his head: when one cannot answer a question, ask one. So he asked, "Did you love Berry, once, Hedge?"

Every set muscle of the young man relaxed. He staggered back into his chair like a limp string falling to the floor. The flood of his sorrow burst out. "Love her? love her?" he cried. "I planted corn an' taters fer her. I put the clapboards on the roof an' fixed up the cabin fer her. I set the hens, an' tended the leetle uns when they hatched: they wuz all fer Berry. I seed Berry smilin' in every sprout that come from the ground an' every egg that wuz pipped. I seed her 'cross the table frum me when I sot down to my victuals. 'Longside uv her, chance times, wuz Peggy. I keered fer 'em both. I thought it wuz all over atween Peggy an' me; she telled me to take my hat an' go. Berry she come a-comfortin' like; an' I keered fer her, oncommon. But Peggy come to make it up; she come to make it up." Leaping to his feet, he threw his arms into the air as if reaching for her. "I'd hev made it up with her, an' led her to my cabin. My God! she come to make it up. I'd hev give my life fer hern, goin' yander dead. Stranger, kill me. I'll give my life fer hern, if it'll fetch her to. She wuz skittish, an' cumscratchitty, but she'd took me fer good. Then big-head got atween us, an' we wuz parted. Berry wuz saft an' comfortin', an' I allus minded that she tried to kiss me back ag'in when she wuz dyin'. I never forgetted that. But Peggy wuz the one that somehow seemed the closest to me last night on the rocks. The ole feelin' come over me ag'in. She'd come to make it up, an' got killed. I'd hev made it up. We'd hev never got big-head ag'in." Sobs shook him as though he was a helpless child.

The major laid his hand authoritatively but kindly upon his shoulder, as he spoke. "Hedge, you must be a man. You must try to control yourself for the sake of those who are living. You must be a man."

"I am a man," he said, firmly, as he rose to his feet. "I wuz a man to Berry, an' I wuz a man to Peggy. I couldn't be two men,

foolin' the one an' t'other. What wuz in me had to come out. I'm used to whoopin' on the mountains. Nothin' hain't never corked me up. I keered fer 'em both, but Peggy come so lovin' to make it up." Hedge paused a moment, as if balancing his loves upon his heart's pivot. Suddenly he stepped back, drew himself up, and looked Major Hardy square in the eyes. Half savagely, half in honest earnest, he exclaimed, "I *am* a man, stranger. I'd 'a' broke with Berry ef Peggy hed hev lived. I don't see, though, how I'd hev made out. I'd hev hated to worrit Berry, she's so saft an' lovin', an' she'd promised to let me coob her jest ez often ez I'd a mind to at Fightin' P'int. (I wuz coobin' the chickens fer the night when I axed her.) I keer fer her a sight, an' she keers fer me more'n—more'n—no, not more'n Peggy did —more'n oodlins. It 'ud go hard with me to fetch sorrowin' an' worritin' to her. I stood atween her an' Corner Lovett, an' I'll stan' atween her an'—— What wuz you doin' with her in your lap las' night? I'll stan' atween Berry an' you er any other feller. I'll never see harm come to her."

"Hedge," said the major, sternly, "you are doing me a great wrong. I pity you with my whole heart. You are not yourself now. You must stop this, and come with me. I have no feeling but that of the greatest kindness for you and Berry. Remember, I am a stranger to you both."

Hedge looked at him inquiringly for a moment, as if expecting something more. The brown eyes of the major commanded his confidence; his earnest words shamed him. He thrust out his hand confusedly, like one groping for help, and said, impulsively, "Take me to my cabin, over the rocks to Fightin' P'int. Somehow I believe you, stranger. Take me to my cabin. I hain't fit to be left alone. I hain't fit to talk to nobody, nohow. I'm all simmered up."

Major Hardy took his hand, and did not loose it until they reached the pathway.

The walk was a silent one. Down by the spring and up the trail, every foot was strewn with awful memories for Hedge,—memories that made his heart jump and every impulse to leap to some treasured use. Presently he grasped the major by the shoulder, and, pointing to the boulder, exclaimed, with a gesture of anger, "That's where Corner died. I know he's dead, but I feel jest ez if, somehow, I'd hev to kill him ag'in. They've piled him over with rocks, but I could dig him out an' choke him till—till——"

"Hedge," said the major, soothingly, "I'm going with you to your cabin as you asked me to do. You have much to endure and think about to-day. Come along quietly. Your trouble grieves me as much as it does you."

"How kin it?" asked Hedge, abruptly. "Your Peggy hain't dead. Nobody uv yourn hain't dead."

"You are wrong, Hedge," responded the major, solemnly. "There is a very dear one dead to me. I thought I saw the dead one living again in the girl you saw sitting in my lap. My love went out to her as it did twenty years ago to her mother, who is now dead."

The two walked on together. The reply, the story, short as it was,

allayed the violence in Hedge. He had in a death a counterpart of his own grief to console him. The rest he did not comprehend. So absorbed were the men in their thoughts that when the ford was reached the half-covered stepping-stones were forgotten, and they waded through with the sluggish step of cattle bound for change of pasture.

Dripping with Big Head's water, they stood on Fighting Point.

"That was a fool job," said Hedge, deprecatingly, as he stamped the water from his boots. "I ought to have packed you across. I wuzn't thinkin'." He led the way to the cabin. When they reached it, he unlocked the door. A folded paper had been thrust under it, and lay white and ominous-looking upon the floor. He picked it up, and scrutinized it in a puzzled way. "Thar's been somebody yere. A court feller, I guess. This paper looks like the court writin's I've seed. I reckon ther's more fightin' about the P'int. Ther'll be more fightin' on it if they try to put me off; unless the rightful owner's fixed on an' gits his writin's fer it. I don't reckon that'll ever happen; fer ther's eight uv 'em hev big-head, an' big-head's good fer the lawyers. Big-head's wuss with men than women, when it gits a good scald on 'em."

It occurred to Hedge that his companion was standing all this while. The natural grace and hospitality of the mountaineer moved him to say, "Come in, stranger, an' sit down. Take a cheer. You've been tryin' to be comfortin' to me. I'm obliged to you. Take a cheer." He laid the paper on the table, with the confidential remark to it, "The feller that writ you hez got to come tell me what your meanin' is; then I'll chuck him in Big Head."

The fire had gone out. Black coals were the gloomy representatives of what had been a pleasant greeting against the mountain chilliness. Hedge stared blankly into the empty fireplace. Suddenly he said, "I'd best make up a fire. Somehow we both got wet. We'll sit here an' dry, an' you kin read the writin's to me ef you will. I'll be obliged to you."

"I've had one sousing in Big Head, and do not care to risk another for reading you that paper," answered Major Hardy, laughing, yet at the same time glancing uneasily at the paper.

"Ther's no fear uv that," responded Hedge, soberly. "I'm 'spicionin' you an' me 'ud hev a tough tussle fer it. Hit's them peekin' law-fellers, thet don't take to water good, thet we sarve that-a-way roun' yere. I'll make up the fire."

Hedge busied himself about it, while Major Hardy watched him with keen interest. Hardly had the yellow light cradled into the crannies of the darkened room, before he noticed the buttoned sleeve hanging against the logs. A coat minus a sleeve has the percentage of value in its favor; but a sleeve minus a coat impressed the major as representing a useless quantity, even where fractioned garments were the rule. Its buttons, too, were of the sort to remind him of old army days. The single nail, driven home through the cloth, showed him that the hanging was permanent and its preservation more than a matter of economy. His curiosity was excited. As Hedge stood

looking into the springing blaze, the major rose from his chair to examine it more closely. Partly to swing the young man's thoughts out of a sodden track, partly to show an interest in things about him, he exclaimed, "Hello! here is a treasured bit of a soldier's coat,—an officer, and a cavalryman at that. What is it doing here? Was your father a soldier?"

"Like ez not," answered Hedge, indifferently. "They tell me these parts wuz full uv 'em at the time uv the war, an' they fathered a sight."

Major Hardy was about to drop the sleeve to its swinging-place, as an unfortunate selection made by him from the few decorations of the cabin, when Hedge added, "Granny Lovett tells me that sleeve wuz what I wuz borned in an' throwed away in. That's all I know about it."

The major kept his hold upon the sleeve, and turned to look earnestly at Hedge. Again he was struck with the remarkable resemblance to himself,—the same stature, the same well-knit form, the belligerency of his brown curls, the fidelity in his expressive eyes, the same graceful droop of his moustache, the laughing set of his mouth, and the easy manly pose, so like his own.

It was plain upon the major's face that complex thoughts were busying his brain. "Who is this fellow, so like me?" he asked himself in anxious query. "An officer's sleeve—a cavalryman's—born in it, as he says, and thrown away. He cannot be my child. Berry is the lovely counterpart of my Belle; she must be Belle's child; I cannot be mistaken. Berry could not have had a brother. The likeness of this boy to me is merely a strange repetition. There may not be such a likeness, after all. Others may not see it. Last night has jumbled my brain sadly. Thinking of the old time so much lately, I suppose. Something drew me to these mountains again,—Belle's grave; the missing child. I ought to have come long ago. Thoughtless, careless wretch. No; I wanted to come; but the pain of it,—the pain of it. I hate pain. I suffer so much from vivid pictures of things that were, and things that must have been,—Belle's love, her trust, her suffering; crazed by my absence, concealing our marriage, her baby born, she alone, sick, wretched, wild, dying, dead. Oh, Belle, and I loved you so!" His face told of the spectral parade conjured from the past. He was bowed, tearful, lost in contemplation of it. Still the visions came and faded; the lonely cabin on the mountain clearing; two orphaned sisters, winning in their simplicity, luxuriant in beauty's lines, and free as air to every impulse. His cheeks tingled, his eyes brightened, his heart bounded, as he in fancy rode again the mountain-trails with jingling spurs and rattling sabre, now chasing a deserter, now cutting through Confederate lines, now being chased in turn. One picture of all others lingered: a midnight dash for life; a volley; a dead horse and a shattered arm; a run; a glimmering light; a cabin refuge; two startled girls; his story told; the quick slipping of a night-cap on his head, nimble fingers tying the strings, active arms tucking him in their own warm bed, and lies by the score, as the loyal maidens stood fearlessly to guard their "grandmother," sickened

to the death, from the fright and shocking presence of pursuers. Then the long concealment, tender nursing; the love that grew for Belle, the elder of his protectors; the love that gave itself, unasked, with woman's generous bountifulness; the hasty wedding in the cabin, one stormy night, when before a belated circuit rider the groom dropped from the loft to meet a willing bride and scare a frightened parson through a chattering rite. How beautiful and happy she looked, blushing in the firelight, her blue eyes drinking from his own love's fullest draughts, and from his lips a promise sacred for life! How fair her sister as she stood beside her, like as a twin; and how scared the parson was, when the hand that brought his fee in sight clasped a revolver's stock, and he swore on it—by the blue of its barrel, its six charges, and Almighty God—that he would never tell of the wedding until called upon to do so, lest harm should come to the bride for hiding a Yankee soldier. Bright were the visions of those few days. The dancing fire on the hearth at his side was not more gay than the play of happiness on the major's countenance. Then sadness hung his features with a steady gloom. A parting scene, with all its harrowing detail, was spread in Memory's frame: a sudden alarm; a passionate farewell; a hurried flight; reckless daring and thrilling escapes; the shout of his troop as he joined it; the merry jest at—— Why did Major Hardy start as if shot, and tear the old sleeve from its fastening? Why did he hurry with it to the door, and nervously thrust his finger through a bullet-hole in the cloth? What made him turn out the lining of the cuff and stare so long at his own name written there? The merry jests of his comrades of long ago had sounded through many years, and found an echo on that cabin wall; *he had joined his command in a one-sleeved coat!* Well he remembered now its loss. Belle Riley had ripped it from its shoulder-seam that she might get at his wounded arm with less of pain and more of speed; and in the dallying days of love and convalescence, thoughts of parting gave no sign; so the coat hung one-armed in the loft, and in the hurried flight the sleeve was left behind.

Major Hardy stood long in the cabin door. That old coat-sleeve was key to many a ward; it threw the bolt barring the mystery of the missing child; it released the knowledge of Hedge's parentage; it restored to him a son. It was plain to him that his wife, in her insanity, had thought of him and him alone. She had clothed her babe in all that she had of his,—the old coat-sleeve,—and had thrown it away, that she might longer keep her promise to conceal their marriage, then tottered home to die of grief. He saw it all, and the sight sickened him. What should he do now? Was this a time to tell the sore-hearted youth, whose ideas were tossed about like sparks in the blackened chimney where he stared, that he was his father? Was this a time to tell of a mother's death? or a time to defend himself? He fairly cursed himself for a coward. Why had he so long selfishly yielded to his dislike for all that brought him worry, thinking of these mountains as threatening giants armed with sorrow's chastising weapons, and left his loved one's memory smirched with shame, her child to die or live with "bastard" covering any name the world might give him,

feeding from the unstable hand of Charity? He had not meant to do a wrong; but that old sleeve uncovered the skeleton of his past with all its hideousness. Strong man that he was, his heart felt the slackening of its beats, and clammy sweat started upon his forehead. What would the manly fellow, true to every prompting of his unrestrained nature, say when he knew the truth? He would not tell him now; he would wait; but certain was he that with every power he had he would make amends. He could not raise the dead and proudly proclaim his wife, but he could right her memory and beget in her son a pride that would do her honor. The very ground on which he stood—Fighting Point—was his own. Months previous to this day, the courts had named him the rightful owner. The little scene before him of new-made fences and cared-for crops, flower-beds and well-stocked garden, warm stable and chicken village, told him that not love of gain but love of woman had impelled the hands that tended them. He would give it all to Hedge. As he had the day before spurred in haste to Granny Lovett's cabin, racing with the storm, he had stopped a moment to serve a legal vacating notice upon the squatter on his premises. This was the paper he was now called upon to read. He smiled as his good heart told him of the happiness in store for Hedge when he should find his labor paid for and the land his own. Less gruesome were his thoughts as castles rose well built for Hedge. But between him and the pictured memories, between him and the rising castles, was the living face of Berry. It sprung anew in him the love he richly gave a score and more of years ago. He felt her warmth of cheek and yielding form, as he had pressed her to him but yesternight. How strong the fancy grew that she by right was his! Now that she could not be his child, he felt the clinging still. His Belle was in her face, form, eyes, and soul,—Belle born again,—and Belle was his. Who was she? What strange resurrection was this?

The voice of Hedge disturbed his revery. "You'd best come dry yourself, stranger. You might ketch cold."

Exciting and agitating as the discovery was to Major Hardy, his soldierly training was such that coolness and deliberation generally controlled his acts. He replaced the sleeve upon its nail, and took a seat in front of the fire, resolved to let Time drift him for a few days, at least, until he had a chance to talk with Granny Lovett. The subject uppermost in his mind would naturally out; it sought an airing, and was not long in getting it. Occasionally his eyes wandered from Hedge to the sleeve on the wall; at last he asked, "Did you ever find out who threw you away in that sleeve, or to whom it belonged?"

The question roused Hedge. "What'd you say?" he asked, absently.

The major repeated his question.

A flash of humor brightened Hedge's face. "No," he replied: "I never tried. I don't reckon the feller it belonged to keers to hev it back; an' the woman that throwed me away in it, hit never 'peared to me I keered to know. Granny allus told me she couldn't be much, so I didn't keer to make her acquaintance. I wuz raythe young an' leetle

when I fitted into that sleeve, an' didn't look much after things then. When I growed into a chunk uv a boy, I knowed I wuz a throw-away; ther's lots uv 'em about yere,—they're counted jist ez good ez other people, an' I never counted on bein' any better. Them thet's had me since granny found me yellin' in the fence-corner hez keered fer me ez well ez they knowed how. I don't b'lieve Ben Harner, or Susie, or Granny Lovett, ever keered to git rid uv me; so they never sarched fer my rale owners. What people find yere in the mountains is their own, anyway; so nobody never hunted up my belongin's. I'm often minded of the blackbirds thet hatches their young uns in the spring; when the fall comes they turn 'em loose to jine the flock when it comes along, an' then they go their way, thinkin' only uv nestin' ag'in. I done reckon my right folks is nestin' somewhere. I've seed the time when I'd like to hev hed the rest uv that coat; it 'ud hev been comfortin' ag'in' the cold. It 'ud hev been some good to me; more'n—more'n the daddy an' mammy that throwed me away."

Major Hardy watched him closely, as he talked. His eyes spoke interest in the independence of the man, and lit with amusement at his devil-may-care philosophy; but they closed on inward condemnation when his last words struck home.

"I wish that you would give me that sleeve, Hedge: maybe I can match it with the rest of the coat."

"You're welcome to it," Hedge responded, carelessly. "Ef the rest uv the coat wuz throwed away ez keerless ez that sleeve wuz, I'm thinkin' it hain't wuth much by this time. Granny kep' the ole sleeve fer me, an' when I moved in here I hung it up. I allus thought it 'ud be a good thing fer me an' Berry to laugh at, lookin' at how leetle I wuz wunst. An'—ha! ha! I can't help laughin' at thinkin' I must hev looked like a red sassige in a blue skin. My poor leetle Berry! I don't reckon she'll ever laugh ag'in,—an' her so made fer laughin'." He relapsed into silence, placed his elbows on his knees, and bowed his head in his hands.

The major shifted uneasily in his chair. "My poor leetle Berry." The words flashed like a glittering sword between her loved face and himself. It warned him to defend the rights he felt some prior claim had given him; then, as his thoughts clustered about Berry, he saw her in the light of Granny Lovett's fire, and drew her closer to him.

The sun had now swung all shadows from west to east, and its glow spread in through the open door with such munificence of light and warmth that the fire sank unnoticed beneath its ashes, save where slanting brands pointed ruddy tips across the andirons at each other, like mimic batteries in range. Major Hardy started from his seat as one urged from dream to wakefulness by some master purpose. Hedge, overcome by excitement and fatigue, was sleeping soundly. The major took the sleeve from its nail, folded it, and placed it carefully in his pocket, then quickly slid the paper from the table and threw it among the smothering embers. "Come, Hedge," he called, "we must go to Abner's."

CHAPTER IX.

THE air was clear, and still as a pooled spring, in the valley where Abner Byrne's cabin rested. Two homing cranes, with dragging legs and slow-waving wings, steered themselves between its rocky sides, far up on seeming nothingness. Where the shadows blackest lay, fire-beetles took them for the coming night and flashed their sepulchral lights. The sky was blank and blue as unsullied steel.

Where the mountain-side had loosed its hold and dropped to leave a cove-like niche, graves huddled in a lonely group, and straight-boled pines stood grimly over them. A mound of yellow earth, rounded and freshly smoothed, stretched near a pine-needled ridge, and underneath it, by her mother's side, lay buried Peggy Byrne.

God's words had been read to a sobbing group, and God's echoes had answered Amen. Major Hardy, erect, with book in hand, gazed dreamily across the valley at a gilded peak speared heavenward. Abner, with his clinging children about him, bent palsied by his grief. Hedge Harner leaned against a jagged pine and groaned aloud his misery. Old Spank crouched at his master's feet and wondered. One face alone of all the crowd—tear-swollen and set in longing—was turned from the new-filled grave; and that was Berry Lovett's. If Hedge Harner had but once turned his eyes to her for comfort, all others there might cast reproach, but her arms would have been about his neck, and his head pillowed where as true a heart as ever beat throbbed thankful answer to his wanting.

At the coming and going of life Granny Lovett was ever abreast of the occasion; but in this special cruelty of Death she felt that she had indirectly taken a hand, by rearing him who struck the blow; she therefore mourned accordingly. Her comprehensive sorrow included all those to whom Corner's murderous work had brought distress,—Abner, Hedge, and Berry. For Berry was the greatest share, because she was a woman, and so must bear in silence the torturing knowledge of a rival and the harrowing longing for a love astray. She saw where Berry's gaze was riveted; she knew the loving girl so well that her quivering thoughts were plain as her sad eyes and yearning face. Slipping her arm about her, she whispered in her ear, "Come, honey; come home. Blessed are they that mourn, fer they shall be comforted ez soon ez they git over the wust uv it, ez the good Book sez; an' keep your lamp burnin', an' the bridegroom'll see the light, accordin' to the Scripter. Let's go home."

Major Hardy saw them move, and quickly joined them. The people were departing. The stir loosened the claws of Despair from Hedge. Though deep and rankling yet were the wounds, he looked about him. Down the rocky pathway he saw the stranger, with courtly grace, take Berry's hand to help her. Then jealousy, hydra-headed and thousand-eyed, crept in him like a demon. Until they disappeared from view, he stood irresolute; then, striding over Peggy's grave, he dashed into the forest.

Many are the first legislative acts ascribed to Dame Nature. Maiden, wife, or widow, as she may be,—because of no settled authority upon

her status,—she certainly has, among the first, compounded her own experiences into law, and vaccinated the human race, not as against the virulence of jealousy, but with it as a bristling armament repelling any charge made on the ready garrison of love, prompt to do battle for its own.

Numbed to nice distinctions as Hedge Harner was by the dread remembrances of the hour, the sight of Berry Lovett with other hands than his own in hers banished grief and all its tender suite. He forgot the dead, forgot even the torn division of his own love. Had there been twenty Peggys dead, there was to him a living Berry, and she, now, more precious than them all. He knew nothing about metempsychosis; far better for him if he had; for into him, unknowingly, glided the soul of Corner Lovett with all its horrid jealousy. Blindly he dashed through the woods and briers, until he reached his hearth at Fighting Point. There, upon the ashes, the unburned paper lay. He opened and read it, and with an oath sat down to brood.

Valley and ravine were but little darker than the night outside where Granny Lovett lived. Berry had gone to bed, and was now in the black realm of Sleep. Major Hardy was looking with much interest at the lid of an open trunk, on the inside of which was a long row of marks leaning at all angles or standing in various degrees of toppling uncertainty. Granny was sitting on the floor, holding a candle close to this, her Family Register, and pointing emphatically to a mark done over several times for certainty, and crowned with a puffy B.

"That streak stands fer Berry. I know it well among the whole lot; I streaked it over lots uv times. Once, I mind, when we thought she wuz dead uv a fever, she come to an' got well. I streaked it that time in the fulness uv joy, ez the Book says, 'cause she wuz livin' ag'in. Then I streaked it ag'in when Corner shot her, an' she come round livin' an' lovin'er than ever. An' I'll streak it ag'in when her an' Hedge gits married, an' my oxen an' fatlin's is killed, an' the weddin' done over, ez the Scripter says. Thar's the B fer Berry. She put it thar herself, arter practisin' fer it with a bit uv coal on every palin' in my yard fence. Look yere, close. Her streak stan's seven forrid frum Hedge. That streak, seven back, with a cross fer a T fer throw-away, is his'n. There's five streaks that I grannied, an' one fer a ragler, atween 'em. The grannied streaks is slantin', an' the raglers is straight. I've been simmered up about it, ever since you told me thet poor Belle Riley wuz your wife, thinkin' thet I finded Berry seven furder along than Hedge; that's about two year. I finded Hedge the day afore I heerd poor Belle wuz gone dead. Berry is p'intedly the pictur' uv her. I can't make out their lookin' so much alike; but Berry hain't hern, major. You kin depind upon it, Berry hain't hern; Belle wuz in her grave when Berry wuz borned." Granny shook her head sorrowfully but positively, as she looked at him and said this.

"I know it, granny," responded the major, with some hesitancy; "Berry is not her child; but—but the other one, Hedge, is. Look at this!" As he spoke, he drew the coat-sleeve from his pocket and unfolded it.

Granny knew it at once. The candlestick sloped in her relaxed grasp, until the candle's flame sputtered with overcharge of tallow. She propped herself against the floor with her other arm, and the tilt raised her feet rafterward, as if in exclamatory gesture.

The major's face wrestled with twitches of amusement, as he added, "This sleeve belongs to a coat of mine. Belle ripped it off herself. Here is my name on it,—written on the lining."

"Great nations! Great jubititee! This beats the prodigal's return clean gone out of sight. I hain't never heerd nothin' like it, no time, nohow, noway. Oh, Absalom, my son, my—— That tex' won't do. An' he fell on his neck an' em—— 'Tain't it, neither. An' Jacob blessed—— No, none of 'em 'ill do. The hull Scripters hez nothin' like it. Do you feel like a faythe to Hedge? Does your bowels yearn?"

Major Hardy laughed outright. His keen sense of the ridiculous routed all conduct proper to the occasion. Granny was quick to interpret face-signs and the many species of human utterance; but she mistook the major's laugh for derision. It hurt her deeply, and aroused alarm for the peace of her favorite ones. "You wouldn't laugh if you'd once knowed what it wuz to once hev a yearnin'. Maybe men don't git it; maybe it hezn't hed time to come over you yit. But I hev it. I hev it like a hen cluckin' her chickens under her wings, ez the Book says. I've watched over Hedge nigh all the time since the leetle feller wuz yellin' in that sleeve (an' ther' wuz room left at each end uv it fer drawin'-strings). An' Berry's keered fer him more'n arything else, ever since she give up suckin' her thumb. It grieves me to larn thet his own faythe hain't got no bowel-yearnin'; it hain't a Scripter feelin' to be without it." Then she added, with alarm and inquiry in her tone, "You wouldn't come atween Berry an' him, would you?—thinkin' Berry wuzn't good enough fer him because he's yourn, an' 'cause you're quality? It 'ud break my heart, an'—an' Berry's. She keers fer him so."

Major Hardy's laugh had ceased at the beginning of her feeling appeal. Every word touched a sensitive point in his kindly nature; but "She keers fer him so" struck like a stab at some vital spot. It was to him as though one had told him his wife had loved another than himself. Notwithstanding this rankling wound, Granny's pitiful face moved him above the pain. He reached his hand courteously to her, as he answered soberly, "I did not mean to hurt your feelings, granny. You have done all that a good, true woman could; and with my whole heart I thank you for it. Let me help you up, and then we will talk it all over. I could not help laughing at your comical position on the floor."

"'Tis kind uv onragler," she responded, with a smile, as she took his hand; "but the floor's all the same ez a cheer to me,—back, legs, an' rockers." Still, the uppermost question in her mind had not been answered. Remaining at anchor, regardless of his lift, she asked again, "You wouldn't come between Berry and Hedge, would you?"

Holding her hand, Major Hardy looked squarely into her anxious face; it was in itself an appeal that conquered all hesitancy. "No,"

he answered, firmly. "If Berry loves him, I will not stand between them."

"The good Lord bless you fer them words! You're a feelin' man, an' has a Scripter yearnin', fer all. Bowels is bowels, fer children, men's er women's." She rose lightly to her feet as she spoke. Her face was beaming with pleasurable content when she placed the candle on the mantel-piece and sat down where she could look admiringly into the major's face.

From the stables and tree-tops, cocks told of their midnight waking; yet Granny and the major still talked on. They had much to tell each other, and they told it without stop or jar. Granny was ever ready with excuse for his conduct and condolence for his remorse, while the major was plentiful in praise and thanks for her.

After Granny's ills, ailments, trials, and troubles had been properly interlarded with Scriptural modifications adapted to her experiences, after the life of Hedge had been itemized and the story of Berry's existence related, Major Hardy asked, "What became of Belle's sister, Minnie? She was a beautiful girl. I used to tell Belle that I was afraid I would carry off Minnie in mistake for her, if I made a sudden raid some time to capture her."

"She wuzn't purty the last time I saw her: she wuz all gone to a shadder. No one never heerd, that I've heerd uv, what become uv her. Arter Belle died, she stayed on a while at the cabin over to Jurdan's Creek Divide. People wondered why she stayed there by herself, it were so lonesome, an' them were troubulous times. But they finded out thet she wuz keepin' sly company with a Yankee soldier, a high-up man, they say. All uv a suddint she took a notion to sell off everything, an' nobody knowed, no time, whar she went off to. Some says the cabin is ha'nted; an' some says they've seed her ghost on the mountains, all in white, an' her hair a-flyin', an' her eyes shinin' like fire, an' she didn't make no shadder, no time. They say it 'peared like she wuz huntin' fer somebody she couldn't find, nohow, er wuz a-waitin' fer somebody thet didn't come. An' some says her sweetheart didn't do right by her; fer he stopped a-comin' awhile afore she sold out, an' nobody hain't seen him since. Hit wuz about the time thet I finded Elderberry thet her ghost wuz seed. Poor girl! I reckon she hez to be dead fer to make a rale ghost. It's better to be a rale ghost frum bein' dead, than a livin' ghost frum trouble."

Granny's answer affected her listener deeply. Surprise, shock, anger, occupied his expressive face in turn; then deep thought, through which, at last, a settled decision shone. He nodded his head terminatively, and spoke as one impelled by his thoughts to speech: "I know now who Berry's mother is."

Granny was seemingly in meditation too profound for the words to reach. For several minutes there was no response. She rose, went to the major, and placed her hand on his shoulder. As though his mind was open to her, she said, "You're p'intedly right. You've got the specifications uv it. You're p'intedly right. Poor Minnie! Poor girl! Let him, er her, thet is without sin, heave the first rock at her, ez the Book says. Ther's oodlins uv rocks in this kentry, but the folks

to heave them is skerce. Ef anybody raises a hand to her, er says a disrespective word, I'll let 'em know that Berry is Elderberry Lovett; an' Elderberry Lovett she'll stay till she hez a mind to alter it her own self. My ole man faythered her ez soon ez I fetched her home; I said Elderberry, an' he said Lovett,—ez good an' forrid a name ez there is in these parts; an' it shall stan' that-a-way fer all time an' etarnity an' the hull hereafter, ez the Scripter says. I done reckon you're about ready to go to bed."

CHAPTER X.

THE next morning the major sat on his horse at the yard gate. Granny Lovett, while they talked in confidential tones, held fast to his bridle-rein, loath to let him go. Berry stood in the cabin door, a fair picture for the sun's first rays to shine upon and for budding clusters of the twining rose to frame appropriately. Something in Major Hardy's parting words had hastened hope to Berry's face, and, with it, color to her rounded cheeks. Her blue eyes—blue as the morning sky, and, like it, seen through a mistiness—were open wide, and fixed on the No Land where eyes so oft confide their precious secrets. Reluctantly, Granny let fall the rein, saying cheerfully, as she did so, "Good luck to you, major, an' a safe journey. You'll be back in 'bout a week, an' you'll be main welcome. Take keer uv yourself; good men is skerce."

The major made some remark that gladdened Granny to her jovial self, and got for him a sounding thwack on his well-turned leg, accompanied by a push to his horse as a starter.

At Fighting Point, Hedge Harner sat brooding on his cabin step. His chickens called in vain from their latticed coops, and chicklets shrilly piped their wants. All the night long he had tossed and turned, dreamed, fretted, brooded, until, condemned by his own thoughts to sleepless misery, he had risen and then sat down to brood again. Over and over again he asked himself, "Who is this stranger that has come among the mountains to disturb me?" He had heard Granny whisper his name—James Hardy—with the quick ear that feeds a jealous brain. There was his signature upon the notice to quit his lands and tenements. "*His* lands and tenements, forsooth! Had not he, Hedge Harner, built the cabin and fenced the land, erected the stable and planted the crops? Was he going to submit? Was he going to be put out? Were all his work and plans for Berry——Berry? Curse him! what right had he to have Berry on his lap, to take her by the hand, to touch her? He would rue the day he came to Big Head regions. And yet he was a feelin' man. Maybe it would all come right. No; he was a spy, a land-shark, a robber of the poor, a breaker-up of plans, a sneakin' feller meanin' no good to nobody. He was huggin' Berry!" And so, with untrained, unchecked passions running riot in him, Hedge sat and brooded.

No use to tell the story. No use for any other hell than where Love lights the fire and Jealousy feeds the flame. This earth is covered fathoms deep with such charred bodies; and where black angels flock, are such singed wings.

At last Hedge braced himself with some strong determination. He rose, stuck the paper in his pocket, lifted his rifle from its hooks, fastened his door, loosened his stock to roam at will, and took to the mountains, there to watch and wait,—the demon of Corner Lovett throned in him as counsellor.

Often, during the week following, had Granny Lovett, choked with news and gagged by secrecy, trudged to Hedge's cabin to hint at coming consolation and give him present comfort; but she as often found the cabin empty. Her brain grew weary of the load; her mother-heart was heavy with anxiety. Berry, too, had longer sittings with wan Despondency, between the rosy visits of Hope. What was Granny's joy one afternoon, just as a week measured Major Hardy's absence, to see Hedge standing on the trail she followed home from Fighting Rocks! but what was her horror when she saw him quickly lean over the ravine's depth, cock his rifle, and point it downward at the spring! Her stricken eyes were glazed, her tongue was speechless; for there by the mirroring pool Hedge's own father sat, with his heart's love—Berry—close beside him. She tried to call to Hedge; but no sound would come. She tried to run to him; but her legs seemed frozen. She leaned against the rocky side, in agony, and closed her ears to the coming shot.

Silently the spring-flow stole among its pebbles and slipped away, leaving the tiny pool unruffled in patience to gather more. Major Hardy had just ceased speaking. His words had softened Berry's eyes to a warm gaze of love into his own, as he placed a package in the lap made by her half-bare arms then clasped about her knees. Whether from the thankfulness of love, Hedge knew not, but, as he watched them from above with haggard face and stony eyes, she threw her arms about the major's neck and kissed him fondly. His passion was at its height. The fiend of Jealousy had cast this its hottest burning brand upon his heart's flame. He raised his rifle and aimed it straight at Major Hardy's heart. The major's face was toward him, filled with love and brimming over with pleasure. The trigger loosened on its catch.

A revulsion came. Along the levelled rifle-barrel Hedge saw a face like his own, and to it pressed the loving lips of Berry. The scene reminded him of that cherished day when, thus, she just so fondled him. A plaintive cry, that many a time had pleaded for her and wakened every tender generous impulse in him,—"She tried to kiss me back ag'in, dyin',"—now rose above the brawl of devil's fight for precedence, and ushered in the God of Good to fight down every enemy. He raised the gun above his head, and with an angry scowl, condemning self, he dashed it down the rocks. With a convulsive gesture, as though to tear himself to pieces, he exclaimed, "I'm ez mean a skunk ez Corner Lovett. I b'lieve that devil's in me. I wouldn't hurt her leetle heart if she keered fer forty men." The fire in him was out, and bitter tears came fast to lay its senseless ashes.

The rifle, falling, clinked against the jutting rock-points; its cap was struck, and down by the spring-side a sharp report rang out. Hedge heard it. His face grew gray with fright. With terror

stretching his eyelids open to their utmost, he looked over the ledge, and there, below, saw Berry lying lifeless by the spring, and Major Hardy bending over her. Sure of foot and steady as a somnambulant, with fixed stare and mouth wide with horror's gasp, Hedge sped down the trail, leaped the steps at the spring, and threw himself upon the ground at Berry's side, fumbling her over, like a maniac groping for some ghastly wound he cannot find.

"She has only fainted, Hedge," said Major Hardy, soothingly, alarmed by the wild look and actions of the youth. "The noise and shot frightened her. She has borne much lately,—been over-anxious, and unstrung. She has only fainted; she will recover in a minute."

Hedge stared at him blankly. Slowly the major's words unfolded their meaning to his brain. His hands ceased their wandering, and settled to caressing strokes on golden hair and pallid cheeks. Thought responded to touch; he realized that she was living. He tenderly slipped his arm under and raised her: lower and lower went his head: "Berry; my own leetle Berry; my leetle sweetheart: come to!" he murmured, softly, as if waking a babe.

She opened her eyes, and, seeing who it was, offered her lips to his.

Hedge looked quickly up at Major Hardy, and, with a radiant joy in face and voice, he said, "She's tryin' to kiss me back ag'in, livin'!"

Major Hardy answered with an assenting smile.

Granny had seen Hedge withdraw his rifle from its murderous aim and dash it to the ravine, but her well-stopped ears had not heard the shot. She raised her hands to heaven in joyous thankfulness, then slapped them on her thighs as if about to give exultant crow. "Thank the good Lord fer that!" she exclaimed, triumphantly. "The devil's out uv him. He didn't know he wuz aimin' at his own pop, er he'd never hev done it; no, never, nohow, no time, noway. Thank the good Lord fer castin' the devil out an' savin' him! The Lord put a tar-swipe on Cain's forehead fer killin' his brother; but thar's no tar ner swipe fer Hedge's. Thank the good Lord fer that! He shan't cut sich a right caper ez that ag'in,—p'intin' a gun at his own fayther; jalous uv Berry, an' her lovin' him more'n ever; jalous uv his own pop, an' him away fer a week fixin' things fer 'em in a lawin' way. I 'spicion he wuz jist tellin' Berry how he'd fixed it, an' who he is; an' she wuz jist huggin' an' kissin' him fer it in her lovin' way. Ef I cotch the devil clawin' at Hedge ag'in, I'll p'intedly say, 'Git behind me, Satan, er I'll put you thar,'—ez the Scripter says. I'll make his fayther tell him he's his pop. I can't stan' it no longer, nohow. I'm all pufferty up an' like to bust holdin' in, an' hez been this week back. Whar on airth hez Hedge gone to?"

The anxious query put motion into Granny. She hastened after him down the path, and so engaged was she with her busy thoughts that she did not look up from the rugged way until she paused to descend more slowly the step-way to the spring. "Great nations!" she ejaculated, when she saw Hedge with his arms about Berry, and Major Hardy calmly looking at them,—"Great nations! If it hain't the prodigal's return to his fayther; only he's got his arms around the wrong neck; ez the Book says." She could keep the secret no longer.

"Hedge!" she shouted, throwing her hands into the air, then bringing them wide-spread to her knees, where they rested, she half stooping, to better hold her steady while she peered for every move her startling gush of news might bring about. "Hedge!" again, until the rocks shouted, "you're the prodigal returnin' to your fayther! He's your fayther,—your own pop! Major Hardy's your fayther! You've fell on the wrong neck! He's your right pop! You've sinned ag'in' heaven an' afore him, an' you're——No——Git up, Hedge, an' shake han's with him; the Scripter says it." Granny paused to see the effect of her words and catch her fast-going breath.

At the first sound of Granny's voice, Major Hardy darted her a glance of recognition, and nodded encouragingly. As she proceeded with her electrifying proclamation, her eyes rested upon Hedge, full of kind interest and bright with expectancy. Hedge, startled, looked at Granny, then at the major. What he heard and saw set back his slowly recovering brain. It was as a relapse to helplessness in a convalescent. He looked into Berry's upturned face, just coloring from full consciousness of all about her, for the comfort he knew to be there,—the remedy in a loved one's presence. Granny saw it, too, and guessed the meaning of his quiet and appeal. With all the positive assurance gesture, tone, and words could give, she said, "I'm tellin' you the gospel truth, Hedge,—the hull gospel truth,—Matthew, Mark, Luke, an' John, the Old Testymint an' the Apocryfy. Major Hardy, sittin' thar lookin' at you with his bowels yearnin', is your fayther. Belle Riley, the purtiest an' lovin'est girl I ever knowed, 'cept Berry (an' she looks ez much like her ez two leetle suckin' pigs, without ary spot), wuz your mother. An' your fayther keers fer Berry like a'most as he did fer her. She went out uv her mind frum grievin' fer your pop when you wuz borned, an' he wuz away fightin', an' maybe gittin' killed, an' couldn't git home to her; an' she throwed you away in the fence-corner. Then the poor, dear critter went down dead. Your fayther rode a long ways at the risk of his life to be at the buryin', an' he took on powerful at the grave. I know where she's buried, an' she's goin' to have a pure white monymint with MY WIFE cut on it in big letters an' signed James Hardy. Fer Belle Riley was your fayther's wife, Hedge, tight ez a real preacher could tie 'em. She wuz your mother, an' he's your fayther. He's told me all about it. I've knowed it for more'n a week, an' it's nigh killed me holdin' it in. Ef you don't believe it, an' thinks her thet's been a mother to you nigh ez she kin, iver since she found you yellin', an kickin', an' wantin' somethin' to eat, in a coat-sleeve, an' give you a ministerin' to your wants, ez the Scripter says,—then I'm a-storyin'; that's all. He has the sleeve that you wuz borned in, with his name down in black an' white on the linin'; an', Hedge, he hez the balance uv the coat! Ef that hain't proof, ther's no law an' gospel!"

Granny was glowing with excitement and enthusiasm, and was driving her words toward Hedge's astonished yet now eager face with all the energy a butting head and clinched hands could bring to bear. "He's your fayther, an' a right fayther he is, too. He hez a Scripter yearnin' fer you. Why, Hedge, he owns Fightin' P'int, an' nigh all

the land in these parts, an' hez court writin's fer it. I've seed 'em, an' I know court writin's. He's goin' to give all the hull kentry to you an' Berry foriver. He went away to git the papers fixed in a lawin' way; an' if I hain't most jujubiously mistaken, them's the papers layin' in Berry's lap; an' he's told her all about it, an' he's give 'em to her to give to you, on account uv his Scripter yearnin'; an' that's what Berry wuz a-huggin' an' a-kissin' him fer when you—when you—oh, Hedge, when you——She's the lovin'est creetur thet ever wuz wantin' to leave her fayther an' mother an' all that she's owner of, fer to cling to a husband,—an' that feller's you,—ez the Scripter says. Ef you don't b'lieve what I've told you, ax Berry." Granny was out of breath and unloaded. She was ready, now, to work the others in their parts.

As Hedge absorbed her words and gained knowledge of their weight and meaning, he did not once doubt their truth. Granny was to him the one of all others whose sincerity and truth he never doubted; yet with brightened eyes, and much of his old-time gayety, thinking most of Granny's closing sentence, he looked into Berry's dark blue orbs, now swimming above fresh floods of crimson, and asked, "Is it all true, Berry?"

"Every word uv it, Hedge," she answered, softly, nestling to him.

"Every word of it," echoed Major Hardy, rising and standing before his son.

Hedge thought a moment, deeply, soberly. Again that look of determination which sometimes set his face like marble chiselled to picture resolve, fixed its every line. He rose to his feet, and stood facing the strong man before him. With firm voice, in questioning tone, he asked, "Granny says my mother died uv grievin'. Wuz you good an' lovin' to her all the time, kissin' her back ag'in, like?"

"Indeed I was," the major answered, warmly.

"Then yere's my han'. I'll be a good son to you,—jist ez good ez I know how."

"Honor your fayther an' your mother, Hedge, that your days may be long in the lan' your pop's given you, ez the Scripter says," said Granny, solemnly, as she put her apron to her face and washed it with tears of joy.

Major Hardy grasped the extended hand of Hedge and pressed it fervently. "I know you will," he said. "And you, Berry?" He bent low to catch her answer. Her plump hands went up to his bronzed cheeks, and she drew him close that he might take it.

As Granny and the major walked to the cabin alone, Granny gave her face a final wipe, and, taking him by the arm, she gave it a sturdy pull to rouse him from his revery. "Major," she burst out, triumphantly, "my oxen an' my fatlin's is killed; now let's hev a weddin', ez the Scripter says."

THE END.

THE DUCKS OF THE CHESAPEAKE.

ALL the world of epicures and sportsmen joins in homage to the Fuligula Vallisneriana,—the canvas-back,—the largest, handsomest, gamiest, and most savory of wild ducks. When the crisp days of autumn come, its thoughts turn longingly toward the headwaters of Chesapeake Bay, whither great flocks of brown-headed, gray-backed birds are already wending their flight, straight toward the vast beds of "wild celery" upon which they hope to feast the long winter through.

There is a sort of poetic justice in the fact that the instinct of the *gourmet* brings them hither, the same itching and tickling of the palate that affect man to their undoing. For here only is found that food which gives their flesh the exquisite flavor that makes it celebrated wherever men sing the praises of good living. This food, while commonly known as "wild celery," is misnamed so, for it is really a species of Vallisneria. Being a fresh-water plant, it flourishes best in the upper parts of the Chesapeake, growing in wonderful profusion on "the Flats" below the mouth of the Susquehanna, where it is nourished by the rich loam carried down by that river.

The seeds of the Vallisneria have been taken from this bay and attempts made to grow this plant in other waters, that the one locality might not have a monopoly of the prized flavor; but the conditions elsewhere have proved unfavorable, either from the beds of the lakes and rivers being too gravelly to give the roots the hold they need, or else from their not being provided with the same quantity and quality of fertilizing matter that the silt of the Chesapeake gives. And until this plant is made to thrive elsewhere, we may be quite sure that this region will retain its prestige with the canvas-back as a feeding-ground, and that the birds sent from here will continue to bring a much larger price in the epicurean market than those killed at other points.

One who comes for the first time upon the shores of the Chesapeake might well fancy that their succulent food is not the only attraction the birds find here. The upper bay reaches its arms into all the counties that border it, into Harford and Baltimore and Cecil and Kent, presenting delightful retreats for the game, and making at the same time a paradise for sportsmen, for it is true that along the shores of these inlets are the ideal shooting-places. Add to these the broad expanse of the bay, itself from two to ten miles wide, over which vast field the blades of the Vallisneria float at low water, and under which are the white bulbs for which the birds dive, and you have an area that will accommodate many ducks and many hunters. The rugged contour of the hills, ribbed with granite, the rich and fertile islands, the smooth and shining waters enlivened by the constant movement of the birds, and by the boats and gunners intent on their slaughter, make a scene to stir the heart of any man who knows the joys of a gun.

In the pauses of the sport the gunner may remember, too, that this spot, where, as Cooper finely says, "the Atlantic reaches up an arm to greet the Susquehanna," is of some historic interest. It was visited and described at some length by Captain John Smith, who relates, among other interesting information, that at the mouth of the river he met with six canoes of Indians; but he does not appear to have had an appreciation of the finest product of these waters. Havre de Grace, the town from which the ducks are usually marketed, and the head-quarters of some of the clubs, came within a very few votes of being chosen the capital of the United States, when our forefathers were in search of a suitable location, and, escaping that honor, was burned by the British in the War of 1812.

Several kinds of ducks besides the one most prized are also found here, and the red-heads, which are almost as large and of an excellent quality, can when cooked be distinguished from the other only by experts; consequently large numbers of these are served at hotels and restaurants under the name of their more esteemed comrades, and few are the wiser, while the proprietors are richer. To people who know no better, a red-head under the name of a canvas-back tastes as sweet. After these the black-heads, mallards, coots, and wild geese are ranked in the order named. While all of them are shot when opportunity is afforded, and all are marketable, they are not special objects of desire to the true sportsman.

The breeding-places of the Chesapeake ducks are in Canada, where they are being destroyed in vast numbers by the cutting away of the forests which shelter the lakes and pools where they harbor, and by the use and sale of their eggs. Thousands of these eggs are annually marketed, and by these methods, rather than by the numbers actually shot, they have been greatly diminished. This condition of things seems to be beyond remedy, since a State cannot make a treaty with a foreign power, and the general government is not likely to interfere on behalf of what is practically a Maryland industry, or to provide such compensation as Canada might see fit to ask if a proposal was made to her to protect the ducks in their native habitat. So the prospect is that fifty years will see the extermination of the finest wild fowl in the world, and one of the most prized delicacies of the table.

The range of the wild duck reaches almost from the Arctic to the Antarctic circle. It lives through the summer in the far north, in Greenland, Iceland, Lapland, Siberia, and, as we have shown, in Canada, until the time when the waters in those regions become frozen, so that it can no longer obtain its food. Then begins its flight southward, sometimes reaching as far as India and Egypt, and, in this hemisphere, the Isthmus of Panama.

Our own particular birds begin to arrive from the north on the Chesapeake early in October, but are not in their finest condition until they have fed on the celery for a month. The shooting-season from "sink-boxes," on "the Flats" below Havre de Grace, begins on the 1st of November and lasts until April, and the days are restricted by law to two a week until January, and thereafter four a week, in order to give the game time to feed and rest, and that they may not be

altogether driven away. They need rest sadly, for on shooting-days the banging of guns keeps them moving up and down, from one point to another, from dawn to dark. If you are in a fair position, where the view is not hindered by the islands, you can see a flight of ducks for a mile, after they have passed your own guns safely,—as they are quite likely to do,—greeted by one puff of smoke after another, at each attempt to alight; when finally they will swerve into some broad clear space, and you will feel relieved that they have at last a chance to rest, especially as you did not capture them yourself. As to "shore" shooting, there is no restriction, with an ordinary gun, either as to season or days; and you may try your chance at the first bird that comes from the north or at the last that lingers in the spring. But neither the first nor the last will give much joy to the sportsman; for the one will be found lean, and the other tainted by too gluttonous feeding upon fish.

The practised sportsman will need no suggestion from us as to arms and ammunition when he goes a-ducking; but for the busy man who takes only a "day off" upon the breezy shores of the Chesapeake, we would offer the hint that he provide himself with a No. 10 or No. 8 gun, and with No. 4 shot. It is contrary to law to use a gun that cannot be held to the shoulder, and, in the interest of clubs, marketmen, and the general protection of the game, a sharp lookout is kept by the special duck-police for the law-breakers, who sometimes, at night, float silently near the great masses of sleeping birds and pour murderous volleys from a swivel-gun attached to the end of the boat. This sort of warfare is carried on by a class of vagabondish people who live in cabins along the shore and gain a precarious living from the spoils of water and land. They are the enemies equally of the ducks and the sportsmen. The big guns which they use at night are kept hidden by day among the leaves upon the shore, and in summer, when not needed, are buried in the mud, so that the police who visit their places rarely find any evidence of their methods, although the facts are well known.

In preparation for shooting from the "sink-boxes" the fleet, composed of the yachts of clubmen and the "scows" of marketmen, is anchored at night above the Flats until an hour before sunrise. Then at a signal all weigh anchor, take their chances for the best positions on the Flats, and, when these are selected, cast anchor for the day, sink-boxes being placed several hundred yards from the boats. These boxes look very much like two coffins put side by side, with broad aprons of boards attached to the edges. They are anchored and weighted so as to be just far enough above the water to prevent it from washing in upon the gunners. The decoys, which are painted wooden ducks, are then cast into the water near the box. Just before the first rays of light appear, the yachtsmen and marketmen take their places in the boxes, having been rowed out from yacht or "scow," and the small boats having been taken back again, so that nothing now appears near the decoys but the box, which from a little distance looks like a board floating on the water. The gunners lie full length upon their backs in the long narrow receptacles, with their guns across them, waiting for

the game. The ducks begin to fly about dawn, and their approach is announced by the noise of their wings, or by a splash in the water if they happen to alight among the decoys. At the first sign the gunner who may be aware of their approach is expected to indicate it to his companion by saying quietly the words, significant in "Flat" lingo, "Mark down!" The hunters then rise quickly to a sitting posture and fire at the birds passing overhead, or among the decoys, as the case may be. As the movements of the ducks are very strong and rapid, no time is to be lost in emptying the guns. The marketmen usually have ready more than one gun each, and fire away till all are empty. In case they have brought down any game, and some of the ducks are not dead (as is easily seen, for the dead one's foot or wing sticks straight up out of the water), they give the "cripples" some extra shot to keep them from swimming away. Then, settling back into the box, they await another flight, and so continue until the men on the large boat, who are watching closely, find that there are enough ready for them to justify a trip out, when they take their oars and gather up the dead and pursue the crippled.

The men who shoot for the markets will hire their outfit, consisting of scow, guns, ammunition, boxes, and decoys, to those who have not yachts of their own, furnish meals, and give their labor in the way of rowing, gathering up the game, and other service, for seventy-five to a hundred dollars a day. They count this as the value of the game they would capture if they themselves did the day's shooting. Thus men who go only for an occasional day can be provided for, if they so desire. If they happen to be good shots, and it is a favorable day, and they care to do so, they can reimburse themselves to some extent by turning over to the marketmen part of their spoils. This method of hunting from the boxes affords the best chance for getting game, as they are placed right in the feeding-ground; but shooting from a "shore" has many advantages in the way of comfort.

Some of the clubs have houses of their own, which are elegantly, indeed magnificently, fitted up by men from Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, who annually enjoy their outings among the ducks on one of the most beautiful and picturesque sheets of water in America. Other clubs simply establish themselves at the houses of farmers who possess "shores," putting their own furniture into the rooms they need, and having their board at the farmers' tables. They pay a stipulated price for the exclusive shooting rights on the "shore," for rooms, board, carriages to and from railway, for men to place decoys, row them back and forth, and general service. It is the duty of the farmer or man at the club-house to inform the hunters by mail or telegraph when the ducks are flying well, and to arrange times for the different members who care to come together, that they may not be crowded. Occasionally a man who can afford it will rent a whole "shore" for himself, and make up a company of his friends, whom he invites to shoot with him.

A "shore" under one management usually includes from one-half to one mile, though some are much more extensive and comprise five or six miles. At distances of about an eighth of a mile apart "blinds"

are placed, usually on projecting points of land, and always at the likeliest places the farm affords, where the ducks have been observed to feed. The "blind" consists of a frame of rough boards in the form of a parallelogram, a seat for three or four men, and a little gate shutting them in from behind, so that the hunters are protected on all sides from the wind to a degree. Around this frame the tall flags which abound on these shores are fastened in an upright position, so that when one stands up they are breast-high about him, and when he sits his head is considerably below their tops. These are loosely placed, that one may see through, imperfectly, to the decoys and to any ducks that may be silently swimming near, but while one is sitting still any birds that may be flying by find it difficult to distinguish his rush-covered retreat from the surrounding marsh. The shores are so covered by this growth that it is part of the owner's contract to cut wide swaths through it leading to the blinds, otherwise the hunters would have many a dreary flounder among the tall flags, through the mud or over the frozen ground, to find their positions for the morning. There are enough of these blinds to give all the hunters a chance, two usually going into each, and to afford them a choice, as on some days the ducks fly to one point rather than to another.

The hunter needs to be very warmly clad, for in the cold morning, after a good breakfast, he is to take his place before daybreak where he is to sit still and silent waiting for his game. And the way the air bites along the Chesapeake on a December morning is enough to chill the warmest blood. So he must have extra-heavy underclothing, a woollen vest, good gloves, and warm slippers within his rubber boots. He needs a strong nerve, too, or the constant shock of his gun, if the ducks fly well, will give him the "gun-shot headache," which is about as unpleasant as sea-sickness.

Several years ago the great floods caused the Susquehanna to carry down such quantities of mud that the celery was covered by it, and it was unable to struggle through: so that season the hunters resorted to a trick to bait the ducks to get them to feed at the desired points. They placed corn, in some instances on the ear attached to wire, and weighted to the bottom; and again loose corn was put into bags with holes in them, and these were held to the bottom by stones, so that the movement of the water would shake out a few grains at a time, and thus the ducks were attracted to feed near the decoys. This plan proved so successful that it has since been commonly resorted to at points where there is not much of their natural food. Last season a large quantity of corn was emptied into the Spesutie Narrows, and so eager were the ducks for it that they could not be scared away. On one day at one point the gunners fired at them thirteen hundred times and secured three hundred and sixty birds. One man, apparently the best shot in the party, fired one hundred and six times, securing a bird for each discharge.

The ducks are still to be found in great abundance, and on days when the law forbids shooting acres of them are to be seen quietly feeding. But they are now few compared with their numbers fifty years ago, when the head of the bay was literally covered with them.

There is a story of a novice who was being rowed by some friends right into the flocks, and who as the birds rose asked where he should shoot, and was told to fire overhead with his eyes shut, which he did and a fine pair of canvas-backs fell into the boat. We will not, however, vouch for the truth of this rather dubious story. In those days, before the canvas-back was appreciated, employers were compelled to contract with laborers that they should not be fed on ducks more than three times a week. And when the canvas-back was eaten, it was the custom to use only the breast and to throw the rest away. Like that other great delicacy, the diamond-back terrapin, which seventy-five years ago, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, was broken up with axes and fed to pigs, the canvas-back was awaiting the appreciative epicure to come to sing his praise and raise his price.

The price of a pair of canvas-backs at the shore is never less than five dollars, and usually somewhat above that amount. They can ordinarily be bought from the gunners at their boats at five dollars and twenty-five cents up to six dollars, except near or during the Christmas holidays, when it is difficult to get them for less than seven dollars per pair. Consequently when they are scarce the price in our cities has become much greater, and by the time they reach London twenty-five dollars a pair must be paid for them. These ducks are sent to all markets when plentiful, but a great many go upon special orders over this country and Europe. The Prince of Wales and Bismarck have both received ducks direct from Havre de Grace. Ward McAllister two years ago ordered a hundred pairs of canvas-backs from the shore, and we believe paid five dollars and a quarter a pair. One famous New York hotel advertises on its *menu* a service of canvas-backs for two, at twenty-five dollars.

Delmonico and other great restaurateurs get their supplies direct from the gunners, and keep them in cold storage until needed. Large numbers are also carried off by club-men, who either shoot them or make purchases to keep up appearances on their return home, and they are frequently seen making their way to trains with valets carrying the spoils in full view. Many of these are distributed among friends at home to give proof of their unerring aim. So through markets, special orders, restaurants, and club-men the ducks are carried from the Chesapeake to all points where people have money to indulge in luxury or in appreciation of one of the finest delicacies of the table.

The ducks are a source of revenue to a great many people in this region, the men who shoot for market sometimes making enough in the winter to keep them the rest of the year, and the farmers who have shores to rent making more from the club-men than their farms would otherwise yield them in all. Employees, boatmen, and servants come in for a share in the way of good wages and tips. One negro who was engaged at a club to attend to blinds, boats, and decoys interested the visitors in his prospective marriage, and received gifts of money sufficient to start him in wedded life. The riches of the waters, however, bring a disadvantage by producing a set of idlers who spend the rest of the year waiting for the spoils of the Egyptians in the form of the money of the club-men.

In regard to the cooking of the finest ducks the greatest care has to be observed. They must be plucked dry, and when the intestines are taken out the interior should be wiped with a dry cloth, so that no water touches the duck from the time it is taken from its element. There is a difference of opinion among epicures as to whether the canvas-back should be in the stove fifteen or twenty minutes. And the disputes of the Schoolmen were not more fierce than the debates as to this great point. Not wishing to be sacrificed to the wrath of either party, we merely remark that if you prefer your bird rather raw you can try the fifteen-minute rule, and if you do not wish it quite so raw you may find twenty minutes to be the proper length of time, so far as you are concerned, to apply heat to this delicacy. But by no means enter into controversy on the subject, for if the twenty-minute men agreed to reduce the time to one minute, the other party would eat theirs without cooking at all. When cooked, little or much, it should be eaten with bread and butter, celery, strong sauce, and coffee, but without salt or pepper. The Marylanders, who consider a canvas-back dinner enough without other courses, serve a whole duck to each plate, and if it is a feast at which the gentler sex are not present, and where you are consequently supposed to eat after the example of the three who dined at Ambrose's immortal tavern, a hungry man will consume one and a half or two of the birds.

We would not do complete justice to the subject of duck-hunting on the Chesapeake if we did not mention and give due credit to the "Chesapeake dog." This is a large strong spaniel that has been bred in Maryland and Virginia for many generations, for the special purpose of bringing in the dead or crippled birds; and he is wonderfully expert as well as enthusiastic in his art. He is a noble creature, friendly and good to have about the house, as well as for his specialty. Every shore is furnished with one, and he is a necessary part of the equipment.

A rather pleasant and exciting part of this sport is that of hunting the crippled birds toward evening. Your own and other people's are swimming here and there along the shores and in the nooks of the islands, and you take your oarsman and guns and row after those which can do nothing but dive to get away. Your man rows hard to be near the spot where he anticipates the duck will come up again, and, as they can dive at the flash of the gun before the shot reaches them, you will have a lively time picking up, if you have as many as ten or a dozen cripples.

The gunners usually shoot at all varieties, regardless of their value. In the evening the sorting is done; and if you have a dozen canvas-backs and as many red-heads out of fifty, you feel that the proportion is good, and are glad of the others, which, if not so valuable, still count as ducks, and add to your row of birds which are strung up by the neck to a pole at the back of the house, for the contemplation of your comrades.

The wild geese are here also in great numbers, but they are very shy, will not decoy, and when killed are usually very tough, so that little attention is paid to them. While all is grist that comes to the

mill, the canvas-back is the supreme object of the hunters' pursuit, and this bird is easily king of the beautiful waters of the Chesapeake.

The physical joys of this out-door exercise are by no means the least welcome part of it to many of those who visit the bay, worn by the confinement of offices, banks, libraries, and desks. The early start, the keen breezes, the glory of the light glimmering on the water as the sun breaks, the zest of watching for a chance as the game comes speeding through the air, the sound of the guns, the sense of the equality of the battle,—for the ducks, with their strong powers of flight and keenness, are well matched against the arts of man,—the sense of human company all over the scene, exhilarate the hunter until you would scarcely recognize in these merry, happy gunners the quiet plodders of city offices. The appetite for food under these conditions becomes remarkable, and men gain enough strength in the course of half a dozen outings, of a few days each, to carry them bravely through the toils of the winter. Here the President or Senator lays aside the burdens of state, the Wall Street man forgets about bulls and bears, the surgeon steadies his nerve for delicate operations, the physician repairs the waste of an exhausting practice, and as many tons of cares are emptied into the shining water as there are tons of discharged shot lying at the bottom among the celery. Questions of state, business worries, are lying there together, buried by the spell of the enchanted Chesapeake. Thus the canvas-backs may be classed among the benefactors, by making their wintering-place within such easy reach of four of our great cities. Thus they fulfil a double function by their existence, and as they speed home to Canada in the spring—as most of them do—they ought to take a little human satisfaction, in their summer quarters, in the thought that they have lightened the solicitudes and delighted the eyes of burdened men with their shining wings.

Calvin Dill Wilson.

"MRS. SANTA CLAUS."

"—AND just as I was leavin' the train I clapped my hand onto my coat-pocket, and I found my purse had been stole, with twenty dollars of my Christmas money in it! I turned back quick as wink, and see the brakeman openin' it and goin' through it. He'd have made off with it in another minute, sure's goin'. I got it back without givin' him a chance to speak, and went straight up to the railroad office and reported him for a thief."

A satisfied smile broadened Mrs. Ezra Gaines's lips at the recollection of her own smartness, and she looked across the room at her husband for commendation and approval.

But old Mr. Gaines did not speak for several moments. He beat a little tattoo on the arm of his easy-chair, and glanced out of the window at the long stretch of frosty meadows, and the frozen country road, which the cold gray sky foretold would soon be hidden under a heavy covering of snow. Then he turned his eyes back again to the

open fireplace, where the blazing maple logs were throwing out a world of warmth and brightness into the room.

"It seems sort of too bad, 'Manda," he said at length, with a little rebuke in his voice, "to spoil anybody's Christmas. You ain't sure the man was goin' to steal the purse, an'—I think I'd have let him go, seein' it was the day before Christmas."

"Let a thief go because it's the day before Christmas!" breathed Mrs. Gaines, witheringly. "I ain't so weak and sentimental as that, I can tell you. And it's fortunate I ain't, for we wouldn't have been so forehanded if I had been. Here I can't even let you do the marketin', because you buy for all undeservin' creation. Thanksgivin' time, you remember, I s'pose, buyin' the turkey for a man because he looked 'hungry,' you said. Hungry! It was thirsty he looked. The turkey he took home was a keg of beer, and a happy Thanksgivin' from you with it."

While she spoke, she was putting on a heavy cloak and tying a knitted hood firmly under her chin.

"I'm goin' to drive ter Danbridge now to get our Christmas dinner at Bradines's, and some bundles I had sent out in his cart from the city,—presents for niece Jane's children. I'm afraid to let you go, for if a thief stole ter-morrer's dinner you'd let him have it because it's the day before Christmas—and it might come in handy."

After firing off this bit of sarcasm, she left the room, and in a few moments the old covered democrat wagon rattled by the window, with Mrs. Gaines sitting up very straight and stiff alone on the single seat, looking the picture of indignation.

It was a four-mile drive to Danbridge, along a straight, unfrequented road, gloomy and cheerless, and Mrs. Gaines was thankful when she reached the village, where the excited breath of Christmas was already in the air.

Bradines's large country store ran along the main road from one street corner to the next, and its long line of windows was glowing with a soft yellow light thrown out from the kerosene lamps burning inside. Through the steaming panes, gay pyramids of oranges and apples were visible, and solid cubes of dates. Big boxes of cranberries were tipped towards the window to show their crimson fruit, and bunches of red and yellow bananas swung merrily to and fro, a gay bit of color among the ground-pine and evergreen suspended from the ceiling. On each side of the door, like a stiff little sentinel, stood a fir-tree. Their green branches were already powdered with white flakes, which came flying fiercely down from the sky, as though in a hurry to get the ground covered before Christmas-day came upon them.

Mrs. Gaines left her carriage in the line of democrats drawn up in front of the store, and pushed her way through the crowd of country-people that were thronging the market, into its centre.

She walked right in front of little Tilly Wiggins,—who had been standing by the counter for half an hour, asking the butcher at intervals of five minutes to "please put her up two pounds of corned-beef and a few potatoes,"—and completely hid her from sight.

Tilly's patience was sorely tried. She had had a long drive from the other end of the town to the station for her father, who was going over to the store with her to buy, for once, a real Christmas dinner, and perhaps—oh, glorious !—some presents for the children ! Instead of her father's coming, the newspaper boy threw a note at her from him, which told her that he would be detained in the city until the next day, and asked her to buy very, very sparingly for their dinner on the morrow.

And she stood in the store now, a bitterly disappointed, forlorn little girl, playing no part in the jolly bustle and confusion that come with the traffic of Christmas eve. Her face was blue and pinched with cold, her hands were numb, and her icy feet dragged heavily as she edged a little nearer the butcher, waiting for Mrs. Gaines to finish her order. And such an order ! Tilly could hardly believe her ears or trust her eyes as she listened to it and then watched the man pack the things into an enormous basket. A goose, a turkey, a pair of ducks, quarts of cranberries, bunches of celery, sweet German turnips and squashes, apples, oranges, grapes, nuts, raisins, holly wreaths, evergreen festoons, and—would there be anything left in the store ?

One by one the packages were stowed away in the basket, and those that wouldn't go inside the storekeeper carried in his hand, and those that *he* couldn't carry—for there were many bundles besides these, which had come from the city—he put into the errand-boy's arm, and then, smiling and laughing and wishing a "Merry Christmas," he and his small aid took them all out for Mrs. Gaines and placed them in the wagon while she waited for her change.

Then Tilly gave her own little order for *their* Christmas dinner. Coming after Mrs. Gaines's long list of delicacies, it sounded more meagre than ever to her,—so unholiday-like and so miserably poor.

As she left the store with her small package, she glanced back at Mrs. Gaines, standing so warmly hooded and cloaked in the centre of the market, with a fierce sort of envy.

"'Tain't fair," she sobbed as she clambered into the old democrat. "Christmas ought ter be evened up a little, for some has all an' others just nothin'."

The storm was raging fiercely. It was biting, piercing cold. The wind puffed its sharp blasts in her face, and blew clouds of icy flakes up her sleeves and down her neck. Old Dobbin, who had shared the vicissitudes of John Wiggins's life for twenty years, shook his head at the blinding, cutting storm, and refused to go on.

"Oh, I say," Tilly cried, in desperation, breathing upon her cold little hands and beating them against her shoulders, "do go ahead, Dobbin; be a good horse an' git home. I'm 'most froze, an' I can't stand everythin', you know. An' the children will be scairt to be alone in the house. Do hurry up, Dobbin, and don't worrit me any more."

Then Dobbin made a fresh start, to the surprise of his small mistress, and in an incredibly short time they reached the turn in the woodland road where the deserted farm-house stood, of which the Wigginses had taken possession the week before.

The tears flooded Tilly's eyes and her throat closed suffocatingly as she thought of the two children waiting for her in the cold, desolate cottage.

"I'm growed up, an' it don't make no difference 'bout me," she said, aloud, drawing in her breath with a little sob, "but they're so little, and they 'ain't ever had a Christmas dinner or a single present! The only thing I can do to make it different from other days for 'em is ter tell 'em the story of 'Little Snowdrop' every year, the way mother used to; an' that ain't lastin'. Emmie pins an old shawl together for a doll, and poor little Sammy has ter coast down hill on nothin', coz we can't git him a sled. They're thin as bones, an' they're growin' up queer and onlike children, coz they never has a good time, an' it ain't fair."

She dashed the tears away from her eyes with one numb little hand, for it would never do to let the children know that she had been crying.

Dobbin lumbered clumsily into the tumble-down barn, Tilly sprang from the wagon to the creaking floor, and in a moment's time her fingers were working stiffly at the harness. She took extra pains to make the poor beast comfortable in his draughty stall to-night, for the day of their parting was close at hand. He had pulled the peddler's cart for her father for a score of years, and now his services were needed no longer.

Tilly turned from him tearfully to the democrat, and put her hand in the back of the carriage, feeling for the small package she had brought with her from Bradines's. Then she made a discovery which caused a tumultuous beating of her heart, and sent the blood rushing into her face, leaving it the next moment whiter than before. Her hand struck against a heap of furry evergreens, an enormous bundle, and the big basket whose very contents she could name over without a moment's hesitation!

Terrified and breathless, she pulled the basket and packages from the wagon, and then stood silently before the tempting heap, her heart stirred with covetous emotions. Here was a Merry Christmas right in her grasp. All that she had to do was to stretch her hand out and take it. It was a great temptation, and was made all the greater by the glimpse she caught at the kitchen window of two pairs of eyes staring wistfully out into the darkness, and two little noses flattened on the cold pane. But she turned her back resolutely on the enticing pile, and walked hurriedly towards the cottage.

When the children heard her approaching footsteps, they rushed to the door to meet her.

"We didn't burn the wood nor nothin', Tilly," shouted Sammy, hoarsely, "coz we wanted ter have a blaze for you an' popper, an'——"

"He took my dolly, he did, an' made it into an ole shawl," whimpered Emmie, who had kept this grievance to herself as long as she could.

"Yes, Emmie was awful cross coz I pinned her dolly round her ter keep her warm. She hadn't ought ter be, had she, Tilly?" said Sammy, reproachfully, "for she was a-shiverin' and a-shiverin'."

Tilly gave a quick glance at the two children. They looked like a queer little old man and woman as they stood in the door-way, Sammy with one of his father's ragged waistcoats buttoned loosely about him, and Emmie completely enveloped in an old red shawl, which trailed on the floor in a point behind her. The room was cold and damp and cheerless. And this was Christmas eve!

"I kep' a-tellin' Emmie," Sammy went on, "not ter cry, coz maybe Santy Claus would bring her a real live doll ter-morrer,—for you 'member you said, Tilly, p'rhaps, *p'rhaps* he'd find us this year."

"He'll find us an' bring me a dolly," murmured Emmie, with a satisfied smile.

"Is my father a-stayin' outside, p'rhaps, ter show him the way?" asked Sammy, hopefully.

"Father ain't a-comin' till ter-morrer," Tilly answered, and her voice was strained and choked. "An' we must save the wood to burn till then. We'll go ter bed early an' git nice an' warm that way."

Then she sank down into a chair and put her arms around the two disappointed children. She did not speak again for several moments, but sat with her head hidden in Emmie's yellow curls. When she raised it, her eyes were glistening, but there was a little gleam of hope shining through the tears.

"Sammy," she said, looking earnestly into his solemn face, "do you know what stealin' is?"

Sammy shook his head.

"Well, then, listen,—an' you too, Emmie. Stealin' is takin' something that belongs ter some one else, without their knowin' it, an' never givin' it back, an' usin' it as if it was your own. It's the baddest sort of a lie, an' it's *wicked*. A perlice comes an' shuts you up for doin' it, an' calls you a thief. Remember now, it's mean an' it's wicked ter steal."

She paused a moment. Sammy's eyes were round with terror, and Emmie had crept into her sister's lap and put both arms about her neck in a frightened little clasp. Tilly had unconsciously warmed to her subject, and her voice was stern and severe.

"Stealin' is mean an' wicked," she repeated, "but" (here her tones grew bright and cheerful) "*borrowin'* is different. Borrowin' is takin' something an' tellin' about it, an' givin' it back ter the person not hurt a mite, just as you took it away. An' so, children, out in the barn is a lot of Christmas-presents that Santy Claus means ter give to other little boys an' girls, but I'm a-goin' to *borrow* them for you an' Emmie for just a little while ter-morrer. You can hang your stockin's up, an' they'll be filled full in the mornin'."

There was a moment of dead silence; then,

"Tilly," stammered Sammy, his voice trembling and his hands shaking with excitement, "do you—do you *s'pose* there'll be a sled?"

"I'll have a dolly, I will," Emmie cried, in her bird-like voice, "an' she'll have eyes an' hair—an' a *buddy*."

"But you must promise, both of yer, not ter fuss when you has to pack the things up ter give back ter the little boys an' girls they was meant for," Tilly said, a little anxiously.

"Course we'll give 'em back," returned Sammy, stoutly, "coz it would be stealin' if we didn't; an' stealin's wicked an' mean."

"Stealin's wicked an' mean," repeated Emmie, softly, with a little shake of her yellow head.

And then Tilly felt satisfied that the children had understood her small sermon. So, after putting them to bed, she stole out to the barn and brought all the packages into the cottage, and, with no misgivings, decorated the small kitchen with the Christmas greens, and filled the children's stockings.

It was late the next morning when they awoke. Nine whirring strokes sounded from the old clock just as they came rushing into the kitchen to look at their stockings. Such bulging, fat-looking ones never hung at a chimney-piece before. A doll's bright eyes were peeping over the top of Emmie's, just waiting to be recognized, and a sled, shining with paint and varnish, was leaning against Sammy's in the most ostentatiously conspicuous fashion.

Emmie christened her doll "Tilly Snowdrop" on the spot, and covered her with kisses till there wasn't a place on her stiff little body that had not been touched by her red lips. Sammy, quite puffed up by the pride of ownership, dragged his sled noisily around the room, and was willing to wager anything that it would beat "ole Dobbin all ter nuthin'." The stockings disclosed other treasures almost as wonderful as these. Sammy sat on the sled and examined his gifts in rapturous admiration; and Emmie knelt by the hearth, dividing the pleasure of hers with Tilly Snowdrop. They laughed and chattered as merrily as good old Santa Claus could have wished, and sister Tilly, watching their happy faces, blessed the "woman in the long cloak" for putting this bit of Christmas in her reach.

It was a royal good time—while it lasted. Poor Tilly felt like an executioner when she put an end to this Merry Christmas. She took the evergreen festoons from the dingy walls and rolled them up in a little heap. She unpinned the holly wreaths from the ice-covered windows and laid them beside it. Then she turned slowly, and said, with an effort at cheerfulness,—

"An' now you must put away the things, and let the other little boys and girls that they belongs to have a good time with 'em like you have. I'll take 'em to 'em now, an' tell 'em all about it."

For a second the old room grew as still as midnight. The childish voices and gay laughter ceased instantly. And in their places came the rustling of stiff paper and the snap of twine, as Tilly wrapped each gift in its original covering and laid it carefully on the table. The dolly and sled were left till the last. Emmie gave a little sob as she whispered a "good-by" to Tilly Snowdrop, and a big tear dropped on its rosy cheek and was quickly absorbed by the paper covering. Sammy himself stoically wrapped the brown paper about the sled, and not a tear glistened in his eye nor a sob choked his throat. But when it was quite hidden from sight he looked up at Tilly solemnly, and said, in a queer little voice,—

"Stealin's mean an' wicked; but *borrowin'* ain't no fun."

The words were scarcely out of his lips, when the porch door

behind them opened, and the "tall woman in the long cloak" stepped into the room.

Tilly jumped up with a start, and then advanced to meet her rather stiffly. A hard little look came into her face as she pointed to the parcels on the kitchen table:

"These are yours, ma'am, I know. They was given to me by mistake, and I only borrowed 'em for a few minutes to show the children what Christmas is to some. We didn't touch your dinner, ma'am, and these things ain't hurt a bit, for the children only looked at 'em. But I made a mistake, ma'am. They never knew before what Christmas was, and it'll be worse for 'em now they does."

Then she raised her eyes and looked soberly up into Mrs. Gaines's face. But her visitor had apparently not heard a word of the poor little speech.

When she had discovered her loss the night before, with her usual quick decision she had pronounced it a "theft." And, remembering the covetous glances Tilly had cast upon her purchases at the store, she immediately selected her as the thief. Then, with a true detective zeal, she proved this to herself by finding out that the Wigginses' old democrat had been drawn up close beside hers in front of Bradines's market. These facts were enough. Without heeding her husband's remonstrances, she took an early drive over to the Wigginses' in the morning, intending to enter suddenly upon the revelling family and terrify them by her presence. She stood outside their door a long time, and as she listened to the children's conversation the stern reproving look on her face turned to one of tender remorse. She seized Emmie and Sammy in her arms the moment after she entered the room, and stood them both on the table in front of her.

Then her quick fingers untied the knotted twine and tore the wrapping-paper from the toys; and before they had recovered their breath, Emmie was hugging her doll, and Sammy grasping the string of his sled as if he never meant to let it go out of his hands again.

"Hurray!" he cried, not understanding the meaning of all this, but feeling someway that it was a time to be jolly. It was a feeble little cheer,—the first he had ever given,—but it gave birth to a whole line of hurrays, each one lustier and merrier than the one before it.

"These presents are all for you from Santa Claus, my—er—my dears," said Mrs. Gaines, a little awkwardly. "And he's sorry he forgot you before, and he wishes you a Merry Christmas."

Emmie looked shyly into Mrs. Gaines's face, and, after a little hesitation, said, persuasively,—

"Good old Mrs. Santy Claus, please ter ask your husband to come with you hisself next time, for, just think, I 'ain't never seen him once, truly."

The fireplace in the tiny room next to the kitchen was filled with blazing pine sticks, and a ruddy glow shone on the frosty window-panes, attracting John Wiggins's attention as he neared his home this Christmas noon. When he opened the outer door and stepped into the kitchen, he put his hand up to his head in a dazed sort of way,

and stood perfectly still, staring blankly at a strange woman who was kneeling before the oven door, busily engaged in basting an enormous turkey.

The fire in the well-blacked stove was doing its best to rival the one in the sitting-room. Its intense heat caused the tea-kettle to sing lustily, and made savory steam rise in thick clouds from the iron pots that filled every place on the top of the stove. From the room beyond came the tooting of horns, blowing of whistles, squealing and squeaking of toy animals, and, above everything, the ringing of gay laughter and childish voices.

In the midst of this din and uproar, John Wiggins's quiet entrance had not been observed by Mrs. Gaines, and when she chanced to glance up from the turkey and caught sight of him standing by the door she rose with a quick start. They stared at each other blankly for a moment, and then a gleam of recognition expressed itself on each face.

Mrs. Gaines quailed before the look of righteous anger that flashed from John Wiggins's honest eyes. Then she straightened herself with a determined effort, and walked courageously towards him.

"Mr. Wiggins,—for you're him, I suppose,—I done a mean act to you yesterday," she said, going at once to the point, as was her custom. "And I'm sorry for it. I was tired out an' cross-grained, and that made me hasty to judge. You didn't intend ter steal my purse, I know——"

"I was lookin' through it ter find a name," interrupted the man, simply, but with the proud assurance of one whose word was never doubted.

"—An' I'll go to the railroad office and make it all right termorrow," she continued, "if I do prove to that parcel of men there that women are as big fools as they seemed to think 'em. Now, Mr. Wiggins, don't lay it up against me, and turn me out of your house, for if you do you'll spoil your children's Merry Christmas—an' mine too," she added, earnestly.

Then she took him by the arm and pushed him towards the sitting-room door. "Tilly'll tell you all about it. Go in to her an' the children now, and laugh and be jolly with them till I git your dinner smokin' hot on the table."

"Am I—wanderin', or is this real?" asked John Wiggins, looking at her bewildered. "Who—who are you?"

"'Mrs. Santa Claus,'" she answered, laughing and dropping an old-fashioned courtesy as she threw open the door and pushed him into the room, gay with its holiday decorations and glowing fire. He was seized at once by three pairs of arms and nearly strangled, and the shouts of "Merry Christmas" rang in his ears, and floated out to Mrs. Gaines as she stood in the little kitchen. Her eyes filled with tears and her voice was husky when she echoed the cry, and she whispered softly to herself,—

"Bless the day!"

Marjorie Richardson.

THE YULE CHARM.

I HAD a blessed visitor last night.
The crisp stars sparkled, and the moon's strange light
Lay on the snowy roofs. The shadows black
'Neath hanging eaves and jutting walls drew back
And seemed to nod and beckon. Bare, still trees
'Gainst luminous skies wrote their weird traceries,
And earth's white page their mystic runes repeated.
Those soundless rhymes my wakening memory greeted.

The still world rested from its whirling flight
Beneath the charm of that enchanted night;
Then slowly grew its mystery mine, for, lo!
Instead of my world-wisdom and its woe,
My child-heart stood beside me, wandered back,
I know not by what spell, what unseen track,
From all its hidden years, its crypt unsealed,
With all the wounds I thought had killed it, healed.

On yonder bough a great white trembling star
Hung as in reach. Soft angels seemed not far.
The silence echoed elfin laughter sweet;
The roofs re-echoed pattering reindeer feet.
Dead dreams awaked, the old power to believe
And love, and life's dull loss retrieve
With doubling hopes. A gift of strange, sweet strength
My child-heart brought me for the year's hard length,—
A gift that waiteth in the starlit snow for all
Who seek the simple heart of this great Festival:

Pure as the winter snows without,
Warm as the glowing Yule within,
I am come back to thy cold doubt,
The searing fire of thy world-sin.
Yield me my birthright in thy heart,
And thy Yule joy shall ne'er depart!

This is the secret of the night:
"To thee, the Eternal child is born!"
Renew thy young heart's fresh delight,
Drop thy world's yoke, so proudly worn.
Lo! harm forbore the worshipped Child,
Yet was the holiest Man reviled.

The moonlight waits, the crisp, keen air,
The trees' fine shadows on the snow;

Sweet laughter, if thy friends shall fare;
  Charmed silence, if alone thou go.
Wide, blessed world! what narrow care
Canst thou not lose, nor miss it, there?

Thou'lt keep the inner glow and cheer
  And warmth for cold, starved souls to share;
Thy holiday the good, round year;
  Thy tree perennial gifts shall bear;
Brave mirth thou'lt make of shadows all
That dance athwart life's festival.

Thou shalt recall the quaint, lost tongue
  Of silver stars and bright-eyed beasts.
The "Peace—Good will" old bells have rung
  To dullèd ears at hollow feasts
Through centuries, shall sound for thee
The key-note of life's melody.

Thine the child-grace to touch again
  With equal love the toil-grimed hand
And brow of thought; through garbs of men
  To guess their hearts and understand;
Strange wisdom and sweet faith to blend,—
Shepherd and king thine equal friend.

Thine, childhood's charm and heaven's joy,—
The full, glad present to employ;
The past—like snows of winters gone,
The future—a vast, noonless dawn;
Lo! even the shadow of thy cross and tomb shall be
But the forecast of thy bright immortality.

M. S. Paden.

CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS AND SUPERSTITIONS.

'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale,
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale!
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
A poor man's heart through half the year.
SCOTT.

CROWDING in the train of Old Christmas are customs and superstitions that have endured since the pagan Briton worshipped under his oak-tree, and the hardy Saxon feasted in honor of Thor, or the Roman broke forth in wildest orgies during the Saturnalia.

The Yule-tide transports us to the cherished feast of the Teutonic races, when Freyer, or Fro, the sun-god, awoke and lighted up his wheel once more.

Our Anglo-Saxon ancestors sang to the Christmas boar-head, just

as did the valiant Norsemen. Just why the boar's head was the dish of honor at this midwinter feast is hard to determine: might it not be because it was a boar that drew Freyer's ship, Skidbladnir, over the woods and meadows, making light all the dark places by his golden bristles?

The Romans held a feast at this season in honor of the birth of Mithras and the return of the sun with life-giving rays.

The Saxons called their midwinter feast Mother Night, parent of all other nights, also *Yule.* The midwinter feast, wherever celebrated, was distinguished by excessive revelry, feasting, etc.

The Christianization of the pagan resulted in the engrafting of his customs on the Christian celebration, frequently quite obscuring its holier significance.

When Pope Gregory sent Saint Augustine to convert Saxon England, he directed him to accommodate, as far as possible, Christian to heathen ceremonies, that the people might not be startled, and in particular he advised him to allow them on certain festivals to kill and eat a great number of oxen to the glory of God the Father, as they had formerly done in honor of the devil.

On the Christmas next after his arrival he baptized many thousands, and permitted the usual celebration, only prohibiting the intermingling of Christians and pagans in the dances. From these early pagan-Christian ceremonies are derived many English holiday customs.

The custom of decorating the houses with evergreens is very ancient. The Jews practised it in the Feast of Tabernacles, a feast very like our Christmas.

The world-tree, Yggdrasil, of the Scandinavians was an evergreen, stretching its branches to the uttermost parts of the earth, its topmost boughs to heaven, its roots to hell.

The green of the pagan and ancient Jewish festivals seems most appropriate at the feast in honor of "the one whose name is the Branch."

The favorite evergreens of the Saxons were ivy, holly, bays.

Whosoever against holly do cry
In a rope shall be hung full high.
Alleluia!

Get ivy and hull (holly), woman, deck up thine house.

Aubrey cites a curious custom of Oxfordshire. The maid-servant was wont to ask the man for ivy to trim the house, and if he refused, or neglected it, a pair of his breeches were stolen and nailed upon the gateway.

The holly was the most prized of all the evergreens. Dr. Turner calls it holy, and holy-tree.

The mistletoe also belongs to Christmas. Its very mention carries one back past the Druids to Æneas, who could descend to Avernus only if he bore to Proserpine the "golden-rayed plant." With what eagerness he sought its hiding-place "among the dark foliage of the twofold tree"! With what joy he plucked it, his open sesame to the infernal regions!

What pictures it recalls of ancient Druids going in solemn procession for the annual cutting on the sixth day of the moon nearest the New Year, the officiating priest, clad in white robes, bearing a golden sickle with which to detach the plant, which was reverently received on a white cloth. To add to the solemnity, bulls, and even human victims, were offered in its honor.

It was supposed to keep away the witches, and the people accordingly paid the Druids handsomely for a bit of the precious plant to hang about the neck for a charm. There is an old superstition that holding the mistletoe in the hand will not only enable a person to see ghosts, but will force them to speak to him. Vallence says it was held sacred because its berries grew in clusters of three. It has changed its mystic power with respect to witches, for one standing to-day under its golden green has drawn to her kisses, one for every leaf.

It has not been a great number of years since one might have seen, in certain sections of the United States, children and young people circling about the hearthstone where the mistletoe was to tell somebody's fortune. Two leaves were placed upon the stone in front of the blazing fire, and any one desiring to know if he or she was loved had but to name the leaves for himself and his beloved. This he might do privately, and thus spare his feelings if the fortune was adverse. When the leaves began to shrivel under the influence of the heat, they moved or "jumped," as chanced, either farther apart or nearer together. Then it was the old story of the marguerites over again, "He loves me, he loves me not."

Kissing beneath the mistletoe dates from the Druids. According to tradition, the maid not kissed beneath the mistletoe at Christmas goes husbandless another year.

One of the most delightful and important of the Christmas ceremonies was the bringing in of the Yule-log. According to an English writer, this was a massive piece of wood, frequently the rugged and grotesquely marked root of a tree.

A pleasant picture this of the Yule-log being drawn through the forest with shouting and laughter, while each wayfarer reverently salutes it, since he knows it to be full of good promises and that in its flames will be burnt out old wrongs and heart-burnings. As it comes into the great hall, the living-room of the old castle, each member of the family sits upon or salutes it in turn, and sings a Yule-song, after which all drink to a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. A favorite Yule-song began with,—

> Welcome be ye that are here,
> Welcome all, and make good cheer,
> Welcome all, another year,
> Welcome Yule.

Those tending the Yule-log were careful to bear in mind,—

> Part must be kept wherewith to teende
> The Christmas log next yeare,
> And where 'tis safely kept, the fiend
> Can do no mischiefe theere.

The chief crown of the festival was the wassail bowl. There is a story that the first wassail in England was offered by Rowena, daughter of Hengist, to the British king Vortigern, with the salute, "Lord King, wassheil," to which he responded, "Drinc heil," and saluted her. The sequel to this story is the marriage of Rowena to the British king.

The worshippers of Thor and Odin drank largely to their gods, and when converted drank as generously to the Virgin, apostles, and saints, by and by honoring in their potations one another: thus drinking healths originated.

Mention is made in Shakespeare's plays of "wassel." In "Hamlet," the king "takes his rouse, keeps wassail, and the swaggering up-spring reels,"—a custom which, Hamlet scornfully observes, is "more honored in the breach than the observance."

The Britons were justly celebrated both for their capacity for drinks and for their skill in originating them. The early drinks were wine, mead, cider, ale, pigment, clarre, and hippocras. Ale was especially esteemed.

> The nut-brown ale, the nut-brown ale,
> Puts down all drinks when it is stale.

The jolly wandering musicians confidently expected a black-jack of ale and a Christmas pie.

A remnant of the English wassail seems to have drifted to us in the Christmas eggnog. Not more than two decades ago, the mistress of many an American home was wont to rise before daybreak and with the help of her maids prepare a huge bowl of eggnog, of which each member of the family drank, servants as well, and to which each chance guest of the Christmas morn was invited.

Not many years ago, the entire Christmas week was generally considered a period of feasting and revelry through many of the United States, although never extending to Twelfth Night, as in England since the days of King Alfred.

There are many superstitions connected with the coming of Christmas itself. To the cock have from time immemorial been attributed unwonted energy and sagacity at that season. Even now it is common to hear one say, when he is heard crowing in the stillness of the November and December nights, "The cock is crowing for Christmas." He is supposed to do this for the purpose of scaring off the evil spirits from the holy season.

The bees were said to sing, the cattle to kneel, in honor of the manger, and the sheep to go in procession in commemoration of the visit of the angel to the shepherds.

Howison, in his "Sketches of Upper Canada," relates that on one moonlit Christmas eve he saw an Indian creeping cautiously through the woods. In response to an inquiry, he said, "Me watch to see deer kneel. Christmas night all deer kneel and look up to Great Spirit."

An English writer says that two countrymen who watched the cattle in the barns reported that two only knelt, but they fell upon their knees

with a groan almost human. They were much angered that he received this story with incredulity.

These well-known lines from "Hamlet" recognize these superstitions:

> Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes,
> Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
> The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
> And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad;
> The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
> No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
> So hallowed and so gracious is that time.

The salmon was a great Christmas favorite, and Sandys mentions a Monmouthshire tradition to the effect that on every Christmas day, in the morning only, a large salmon appeared in the adjoining river, showed himself openly, and permitted himself to be taken and handled; but it would have been the greatest impiety to capture him.

Popular rhymes did not omit the

> sammon, king of fish
> That fills with good cheere the Christmas dish.

A Christmas dinner in those ancient days was a meal massive beyond our comprehension. Only by comparison can we estimate its proportions.

In Gervase Markham's "English Housewife" is a bill of fare, oft quoted, for an ordinary friendly dinner, to which the imagination may add the fitting accompaniments for the "king of dinners."

First course, sixteen full dishes: "a shield of brawn, with mustard; a boiled capon; boiled beef; a rosted chine of beef; a neat's tongue, rosted; a pig, rosted; baked chewets; a goose, rosted; a swan, rosted; a turkey, rosted; a haunch of venison, rosted; a kid with a pudding inside; a pasty of venison; an olive pye; a couple of capons; a custard."

To these add "sallets, fricases, quelque choses, and devised paste, as many dishes more to make the full service thirty-two dishes," which the housewife is admonished is "as much as can conveniently stand on one table and in one mess, and after this manner you may proportion your second and third courses, holding fullness in one half of the dishes, and show on the other which will be both frugal in the splendor, contentment to the guest, and pleasure to the beholder."

The English gentlemen were wont to repair to their country-houses and keep open house at this season, "when good logs furnished the hall fire, when brawn is in season, and all revelling regarded, and beefe, beere, and bread was no niggard." Care was taken to provide "a noyse of minstrells, and a Lincolnshire bagpipe."

"Mummeries" were known very early in England, and were doubtless a remnant of the Roman Saturnalia, when men and women went about the streets dressed to represent all manner of cattle and wild beasts.

In the English country-houses disguises were provided for the guests. In 1348, at Otford, in Kent, there were furnished fourteen

dragons' heads, fourteen swans' heads with wings, fourteen pheasants' heads with wings, and numerous mummers' tunics trimmed with gold and silver stars. Another year the heads were of wild beasts.

To take the place of the old heathen frolics, there were provided, under the auspices of the clergy, plays and mysteries, these being distinguished by the hidden or revealed meaning. These plays set forth the miraculous acts of the saints. Many farcical passages were introduced to enliven their monotony, often making them highly irreverent. In the Chester mysteries, Noah's wife absolutely declines to enter the ark without her gossip, and strengthens her avowal by swearing by Mary, St. John, and Christ; when finally drawn in, she deals Noah a hearty box on the ear. These plays held their ground until the days of Shakespeare.

For a bit of spice in any recital of old English habits, nothing equals an extract from Pepys's Diary, and the following, from "Christmas Day, 1665," is appropriate here:

"To church in the morning, and there saw a wedding in the church, which I have not seen this many a day, and the young people so merry one with another. And strange to see what delight we married people have to see these poor fools decoyed into our condition, every man and woman gazing and smiling at them."

Space forbids a description of the Christmas pie, which our modern mince-pie has entirely superseded. The Puritans would have none of the Christmas pie, declaring,—

All plums the prophet's sons deny,
And spice-broths are too hot:
Treason's in a December pie,
And death within the pot.

The Christmas revels came to an end with Twelfth Night, second only to Christmas in splendor of celebration, and with a sigh of relief, perhaps, and a pang of regret likewise, the spirit of the old Scotch rhyme fell upon all:

Yule's come, and Yule's gane,
And we hae feasted weel;
Sae Jock maun to his flail again,
And Jenny to her wheel.

Elizabeth Ferguson Seat.

YESTERDAY.

TO remember the tender foreknowledge of morn, at the even,
To long for the treasures desired upon earth, when in heaven,
Were as easy as seeking to joy in love-bliss and love-token
When a ripple has passed and the face of the dream has been broken.

Alice Brown.

MRS. RISLEY'S CHRISTMAS DINNER.

SHE was an old, old woman. She was crippled with rheumatism and bent with toil. Her hair was gray,—not that lovely white that softens and beautifies the face, but harsh, grizzled gray. Her shoulders were round, her chest was sunken, her face had many deep wrinkles. Her feet were large and knotty; her hands were large, too, with great hollows running down their backs. And how painfully the cords stood out in her old, withered neck!

For the twentieth time she limped to the window and flattened her face against the pane. It was Christmas day. A violet sky sparkled coldly over the frozen village. The ground was covered with snow; the roofs were white with it. The chimneys looked redder than usual as they emerged from its pure drifts and sent slender curls of electric-blue smoke into the air.

The wind was rising. Now and then it came sweeping down the hill, pushing a great sheet of snow, powdered like dust, before it. The window-sashes did not fit tightly, and some of it sifted into the room and climbed into little cones on the floor. Snow-birds drifted past, like soft, dark shadows; and high overhead wild geese went sculling through the yellow air, their mournful "hawnk-e-hawnk-hawnk"s sinking downward like human cries.

As the old woman stood with her face against the window and her weak eyes strained down the street, a neighbor came to the door.

"Has your daughter an' her fambly come yet, Mis' Risley?" she asked, entering sociably.

"Not yet," replied Mrs. Risley, with a good attempt at cheerfulness; but her knees suddenly began shaking, and she sat down.

"Why, she'd ought to 'a' come on the last train, hadn't she?"

"Oh, I do' know. There's a plenty o' time. Dinner won't be ready tell two past."

"She ain't b'en to see you fer five year, has she?" said the neighbor. "I reckon you'll have a right scrumptious set-out fer 'em?"

"I will so," said Mrs. Risley, ignoring the other question. "Her husband's comin'."

"I want to know. Why, he just thinks he's some punkins, I hear."

"Well, he's rich enough to think hisself anything he wants to." Mrs. Risley's voice took on a tone of pride.

"I sh'u'd think you'd want to go an' live with 'em. It's offul hard fer you to live here all alone, with your rheumatiz."

Mrs. Risley stooped to lay a stick of wood on the fire.

"I've worked nigh onto two weeks over this dinner," she said, "a-seed'n' raisins an' cur'nts, an' things. I've hed to skimp harrable, Mis' Tomlinson, to get it; but it's just—*perfec'*. Roast goose an' cranberry sass, an' cel'ry soup, an' mince an' punkin pie,—to say nothin' o' plum-puddin'! An' cookies an' cur'nt-jell tarts fer the children.

I'll hev to wear my old underclo's all winter to pay fer 't; but I don't care."

"I sh'u'd think your daughter'd keep you more comf'terble, seein' her husband's so rich."

There was a silence. Mrs. Risley's face grew stern. The gold-colored cat came and arched her back for a caress. "My bread riz beautiful," Mrs. Risley said then. "I worried so over 't. An' my fruit-cake smells that good when I open the stun crock! I put a hull cup o' brandy in it. Well, I guess you'll hev to excuse me. I've got to set the table."

When Mrs. Tomlinson was gone, the strained look came back to the old woman's eyes. She went on setting the table, but at sound of a wheel, or a step even, she began to tremble and put her hand behind her ear to listen.

"It's funny they *didn't* come on that last train," she said. "I w'u'dn't tell her, though. But they'd ort to be here by this time."

She opened the oven door. The hot, delicious odor of its precious contents gushed out. Did ever goose brown so perfectly before? And how large the liver was! It lay in the gravy in one corner of the big dripping-pan, just beginning to curl at the edges. She tested it carefully with a little three-tined iron fork.

The mince-pie was on the table, waiting to be warmed, and the pumpkin-pie was out on the back porch,—from which the cat had been excluded for the present. The cranberry sauce, the celery in its high, old-fashioned glass, the little bee-hive of hard sauce for the pudding, and the thick cream for the coffee, bore the pumpkin-pie company. The currant jelly in the tarts glowed like great red rubies set in circles of old gold; the mashed potatoes were light and white as foam.

For one moment, as she stood there in the savory kitchen, she thought of the thin, worn flannels, and of how much better her rheumatism would be with the warm ones which could have been bought with the money spent for this dinner. Then she flushed with self-shame.

"I must be gittin' childish," she exclaimed, indignantly; "to begredge a Chris'mas dinner to 'Lizy. 'S if I hedn't put up with old underclo's afore now! But I will say there ain't many women o' my age thet c'u'd git up a dinner like this 'n',—rheumatiz an' all."

A long, shrill whistle announced the last train from the city. Mrs. Risley started and turned pale. A violent trembling seized her. She could scarcely get to the window, she stumbled so. On the way she stopped at the old walnut bureau to put a lace cap on her white hair and to look anxiously into the mirror.

"Five year!" she whispered. "It's an offul spell to go without seein' your only daughter! Everything'll seem mighty poor an' shabby to her, I reckon,—her old mother worst o' all. I never sensed how I'd changed tell now. My! how no-account I'm a-gittin'! I'm all of a trimble!"

Then she stumbled on to the window and pressed her cheek against the pane.

"They'd ort to be in sight now," she said. But the minutes went by, and they did not come.

"Mebbe they've stopped to talk, meetin' folks," she said, again. "But they'd ort to be in sight now." She trembled so she had to get a chair and sit down. But still she wrinkled her cheek upon the cold pane and strained her dim eyes down the street.

After a while a boy came whistling down from the corner. There was a letter in his hand. He stopped and rapped, and when she opened the door with a kind of frightened haste, he gave her the letter and went away, whistling again.

A letter! Why should a letter come? Her heart was beating in her throat now,—that poor old heart that had beaten under so many sorrows! She searched in a dazed way for her glasses. Then she fell helplessly into a chair and read it:

"DEAR MOTHER,—I am so sorry we cannot come, after all. We just got word that Robert's aunt has been expecting us all the time, because we've spent every Christmas there. We feel as if we *must* go there, because she always goes to so much trouble to get up a fine dinner; and we knew you wouldn't do that. Besides, she is so rich; and one has to think of one's children, you know. We'll come *sure* next year. With a merry, merry Christmas from all,

"ELIZA."

It was hard work reading it, she had to spell out so many of the words. After she had finished, she sat for a long, long time motionless, looking at the letter. Finally the cat came and rubbed against her, "myowing" for her dinner. Then she saw that the fire had burned down to a gray, desolate ash.

She no longer trembled, although the room was cold. The wind was blowing steadily now. It was snowing, too. The bleak Christmas afternoon and the long Christmas night stretched before her. Her eyes rested upon the little fir-tree on a table in one corner, with its gilt balls and strings of popcorn and colored candles. She could not bear the sight of it. She got up stiffly.

"Well, kitten," she said, trying to speak cheerfully, but with a pitiful break in her voice, "let's go out an' eat our Chris'mas dinner."

Ella Higginson.

EMPRESS JOSEPHINE'S HAPPY DAY.

JUST ninety years since, on December 2, 1804, Napoleon crowned himself Emperor and Josephine Empress of the French.

Never was there in the great and beautiful cathedral of Notre Dame a more gorgeous assembly. Church and state congregated there, and the people thronged to witness the great sight. The silent walls of the cathedral echoed the voices of twenty thousand spectators as they cried,

"Long live the Emperor!" and resounded again and again as the three hundred musicians intoned Abbé Rose's hymn, "Vivat Imperator."

They were the same walls that had echoed the Te Deums for all the nation's victories, that had heard kings' funeral orations pronounced, that had witnessed the shameless Goddess of Reason reign, and had heard innumerable litanies sung and masses celebrated.

Many things have passed away, proudest fames have vanished, but the cathedral remains. The rosy light glints through its windows to-day on a peacefully worshipping congregation. The republic is regnant. Kings and emperors lie in the sealed vaults, their sway but a memory. The dust of the Conqueror, according to his wish, lies in the city and among the people he loved so well. That costly tomb is not far from the cathedral where he was crowned; but what line can measure the distance between Napoleon the crowned Emperor beside Josephine, and Napoleon the returned exile all alone?

The span of ninety years is short as we look back, forgetting the interim, on that famous scene.

The day was cold, and the sky changeful, as though to foreshadow the fickleness and vanity of man's proud splendor. Early in the morning vast throngs of citizens gathered in the streets and crowded the windows and balconies.

At nine the pontifical procession started for Notre Dame. Leading, according to tradition, was a chamberlain mounted on a mule and carrying a great cross. Then came Pope Pius VII., clad in white, seated in a carriage guarded by cavalry and accompanied by eight carriages in which were dignitaries of the Church. They reached the cathedral, and proceeded to the altar in regular order and with great pomp, while more than a hundred clergy intoned the hymn "Tu es Petrus." The Pope seated himself on the pontifical throne, and awaited Napoleon.

When Napoleon entered, loud bursts of applause rent the air. Forgotten was all the spilt blood, forgotten or hushed were memories of the First Consul. The spectators were fascinated by the little great man clad in white satin embroidered in gold, with a regal cloak of crimson velvet covered with golden bees and bordered with olive-branches, oak, and laurel. Ermine edged the mantle and formed the cape. On his neck gleamed the diamond necklace of the Legion of Honor, and on his head was a Cæsar's crown of golden laurel. Princes and dignitaries attended him, and he moved with stately tread.

The Empress, always lovely, appeared in a silver brocade embroidered with golden bees. Pink gems glistened in her gold girdle and mingled with the antique cameos on her neck and arms. Her diadem was pearl-laden, twined with diamonds. At her shoulders was fastened an ermine-lined red velvet train covered with bees, and held by the Princesses Eliza, Pauline, Charlotte, Joseph, and Louis. David received the royal order to transmit this day's glory to future ages. The subject was manifold; each act in the drama deserved to be guarded for future generations to look upon and ponder. But the artist gallantly chose to paint Napoleon in the act of crowning Josephine.

As we look at it in Versailles, we are glad we have this picture of Napoleon. Indelibly linked with his glorious memory is the thought of the woe he caused; volumes have been written telling of his infidelity, but here before our eyes we see the affectionate husband, the glad beating of the heart scarce hidden by the Emperor's cloak, as he joyously crowns the never more gracious and lovely Josephine. His words to David are sincere: "It is good, David, very good. You have divined all my thought; you have made me a French knight. I thank you for transmitting to ages to come the proof of affection I wanted to give to her who shares with me the pains of government."

And we know that tears of joy came to Josephine's eyes as her lord placed the crown upon her head.

Vanity, a frailty of the whole race, could not but be pleased at the ceremony of the day. But the real joy of Josephine began the evening before, when her prayer of years was at last granted. She who in the midst of an irreligious age had preserved her hold upon the Church and remained a true daughter of the faith had daily, hourly prayed to have her marriage with Napoleon blessed by the Church. When the Holy Father was under her roof she besought him with tears, and he promised she should have her will. And on the 1st of December, in the evening, an altar was raised in the Tuileries, and, with Talleyrand and Marshal Berthier as witnesses, Josephine and Napoleon were married.

We cannot wonder that the woman felt a glow of happiness as the last vision of divorce from the man she worshipped vanished. As he advanced, she knelt, trembling and silently weeping. As the crown rested on her head, memories surged over both. Again Napoleon was the happy young officer, glad with the appointment for command of the Army of Italy, obtained for him by Josephine. Again he thought of her tact and graciousness uniting the old with the new régime. And now the sublime moment to them both had come. There in tearful loveliness before him knelt the originator of all his triumphs. Gladly he crowned her Empress, and together they proceeded to the great throne to receive the blessing, "May God establish you on your throne, and may Christ cause you to reign with him in his eternal kingdom."

There, amid the music of Abbé Rose's hymn and the Te Deum sung by four choirs with two orchestras, we will leave Josephine and Napoleon. The Pope will finish the mass, oaths will be taken and made, and then follows a short swift train of brilliant gladness, followed by wailing sadness. But we will forget what follows.

There we will leave them, happy. The woman of forty-two blushes and smiles as if she were twenty: she is happy, she is content. There she sits regally and listens to the mass of her beloved Church, while the Emperor, seated a step higher than she, calmly waits the end of the celebration. His heart beats and his eye kindles while he thinks of glory, and ever more glory.

And the throng join in the service with freshened admiration and perfect trust in the man whose star they believe undimmable.

Edith Duff.

WITH THE AUTOCRAT.

EVERYBODY knew Dr. Holmes through his books, and better than a reader knows most authors, for he put himself into what he wrote with few reserves and no disguises. But those who had the advantage of knowing him in the flesh were impressed by three facts: that he was one of the best fellows in the world; that he talked as well as he wrote; and that he loved to talk about religion, or at least about theology. He said he had occasion to be somewhat acquainted with these matters, since he had gone to church every Sunday of his life and listened to several thousand sermons. He liked to listen to sermons, and to preach them too, in his own free and genial fashion. I don't know that he cared much for the candlesticks and upholstery of the sanctuary—parish reports, statistics of missions, and the like; but the framework, the skeleton, the doctrines, he was as much at home with as if he had been a D.D. like his father. As he would have said, bones were in his line; had he not been a professor of anatomy for forty-odd years?

True, his interest in the doctrines was largely radical: he was chiefly concerned to improve, if not to upset, the beliefs of his ancestors. Mr. Lowell once said to me, with vast amusement, "Most of us have the polemic rage, like the measles, in our youth, and outgrow it by twenty: Wendell doesn't seem to have got over it yet." But reformers don't get over their mental measles—they don't grow indifferent; and Dr. Holmes did a deal of reforming in his way.

When I first called on him, a great many years ago, the denomination to which I then belonged—let us borrow Dr. Hale's word, and call it the Sandemanian—was little known in Boston. The Autocrat said he had never met a live Sandemanian before, and wished to know what that peculiar people believed. I began to expound according to my lights, which may have been darkness, for he soon called a halt. "Those are your own views," he observed, mildly but firmly: "they are doubtless of great value and interest; but my present curiosity is as to the official tenets of your communion." So I took a new tack, and cut the tale as short as might be, for I was not there to talk, but to listen to him. I soon found—or at least I received the impression—that he was not going to waste his sweetness, nor let himself go till he had plumbed the visitor's mind far enough to guess whether I could follow him. This is an excellent plan, such as should be followed by all the wise and great who are in the habit of receiving strangers.

Apparently he satisfied himself that I was not wholly sterile soil, for he soon let himself go with a vengeance. It was as if he had just thought out a great problem, and must ease his bosom of its perilous stuff. "The popular religion," he said in substance, "is based on the assumption that the creature is under infinite obligations to the Creator, and He under none at all. But consider. Begin with the relationship between earthly parent and child. Who ordains that, and the child's

existence too? The child? No; the parent. Then is not the burden of responsibility and duty heaviest on the father's side?"

There was nothing to say to this, and he went on, growing so earnest and eloquent that the words burned themselves into my memory. His premises—for the moment—seemed orthodox enough, whatever heresy might lurk in his conclusion. "Pass from the human to the heavenly relation, and it seems to me the argument is not weakened, but vastly strengthened. When I remember that we are infinitely weak and He is infinitely strong, that He is infinitely wise and we are infinitely ignorant and foolish, that we are infinitely sinful and He is infinitely holy,—I think that, whatever our obligations to Him, His to us are infinitely greater."

This rather took my breath away. Had I been older and wiser, I might have suggested that his argument knocked the underpinning from all the received systems. He would probably have answered that that was what he meant it to do, and that Christianity was old enough to walk without crutches. If I had asked him to go a step further, and solve the terrible question he had led up to, I think he would have said, "Certainly. His obligations to us are infinite, and—He discharges them." Under all his surface radicalism, the Autocrat's faith was as sound as his heart. For him the sun always shone, without and within. He had an assured income, a charming domestic circle, a temper as happy as his wit was nimble, early and abundant recognition,—"love, honor, troops of friends." To such, trust in the Power that shapes our ends is easy, and speculation safe. The problems that are so terrifying to many existed for him only on their intellectual side.

Having received enough to chew upon, I remember little more of that evening, except his saying that he found two different theologies in the New Testament, and liked that of Christ much better than Paul's. Granted the difference, most of us would agree with him here, rather than with Mr. Francis Newman, who in the most painful chapter of his once-famous "Phases of Faith" says distinctly that he prefers Paul to Christ, both as a man and as a theologian. But Dr. Holmes spoke with an air of concern, as if he wished to be on good terms with everything in the Christian Scriptures, and took it hard that he could not. I reminded him that our Lord's work had to be completed by His death and what followed, and that therefore the Epistles occupied ground further on, so to speak, than the Gospels, starting where these ended. He said he knew that, but it did not satisfy him. And so we parted for the night.

After that I saw him whenever I was in Boston, and was received like an old friend. That implied no compliment to me, for he doubtless felt in that way to every one who could put two ideas together and listen to him without being shocked. As we all know, he was the kindliest as well as the most approachable of great men. To assume the swelling port of a dignitary, to hold a fellow-creature at a distance, to consider the conventional and prudential proprieties in his speech, was not in him. Once he had measured and admitted you, you were in his confidence, and welcome to his deepest as to his lightest thoughts. He

did not need to hoard up all his good things for the pages of the *Atlantic;* many of them, in fact, he preferred to give out *viva voce* to a much smaller audience, whom there was less risk of offending. He was too humane to hurt feelings needlessly, and there is much to admire in the slight reserve which mitigated the frankness of his books.

One lovely March day—March has some fine days even in Boston—we were walking on the Charles River bridge, when suddenly, apropos of nothing at all, he turned upon me and exclaimed with great emphasis, in his odd, jerky way, "I believe the Old Testament was the crude effort of a barbarous people toward the attainment of a religion and a literature;" and instantly he added, with a twinkle, "I'm just as bad as that!" Those were not the days of "Literature and Dogma;" but if I had said, "Now, doctor, you surely must admit the unique moral nobleness of those ancient books, the dominating recognition of a Force that makes for righteousness," he would have said, "Of course, of course: I'm only giving you a jocose view of the other side." I could guess what was in his mind: he was thinking of "Cursed be Canaan," and Deborah's laudation of Jael's murder of Sisera, and Balaam's ass, and Joshua's strange astronomical adventure, and what Matthew Arnold calls the "immense misapprehension" of these by the mediæval mind.

A few grandfathers may remember reading "The Guardian Angel" as it appeared in the *Atlantic*, I think in '66. It was then the custom, since chiefly honored in the breach, to criticise the successive fragments of a serial. It was also considered improper—except in the newspapers, when recording melancholy facts—to speak of the clergy in any other terms than those of respect and affection: in that regard too we have moved on since. Dr. Holmes was rash enough to introduce an "orthodox" parson who was perhaps not as good as he might be, though his transgressions were but gently hinted at, and his shortcomings painted with no heavy brush or glaring colors. In the May number this dubious shepherd was dwelt upon more than usual,—chiefly by innuendo and insinuation,—and thereat arose an indignant chorus. I happened in Boston at the time, and found the author in what is termed "a state of mind." Said he, "I don't care what the religious papers say about me,—that is expected; but I do care what the —— says. Many of my friends take it, I've taken it myself; and now its reviewer says I'm hitting a man of straw—that there are no such ministers!" I tried to soothe him: even so high an authority as the —— was mortal and fallible, etc.; but he would not be consoled.

Two days later I dropped in again, and lo, a change had come over his spirit. He was pleasurably excited, almost gleeful. "Have you read about that Monothelite minister in Damascus?" (Not to be personal, I change the names.) I had not: thus does he who neglects the morning paper miss much useful learning. So the doctor told me the tale: it was not an edifying one. "There's my man of straw! Now, did I say anything half as bad as that?"

It is twenty years since I saw him last: none the less I remember

with affectionate respect one who had no pretences—least of all the pretence of being above our common weaknesses—and no guile; who could afford to let his real self be seen of any; who would no more attitudinize or play a part than do a mean action or say a false or cruel word. Most of us, when hurt, assume indifference and are mindful of our dignity, appearance being more than reality. Not so he.

Many of us must remember the dominant idea of "Elsie Venner," in which the snake-mark is set upon the heroine before her birth, and a pure and noble woman-soul struggles with an intruding serpent-nature to the death. He told me once that he had written this without any basis of known fact, as an exercise of the imagination upon what seemed to him psychico-physical possibilities, and was amazed afterwards to receive letters from two men of character and position, one of them, I think, a Confederate official, describing similar cases in their families and wondering how he had heard of them.

Whether those two novels are still read or not, they deserve to be. The author was not a professional romancer, indeed, but there are treasures of wisdom in them, and abundant human interest. Nor was Dr. Holmes merely the civic functionary, social ornament, and poet of occasion, that some seem to fancy. These were but phases of a variously gifted mind, entwined with a rich and generous nature. Above all, the man was genuine; not merely wit, but humorist; as true a union of aristocrat and democrat as we have seen, or are likely to see again. This must be felt by the thousands who knew him near at hand, and the tens of thousands who knew him somewhat further off, through the medium of his books. He often made us smile, he sometimes made us want to cry. Many things in his verse, and more in his prose, have gone to the general heart. The word that comes from England is surely echoed through America, that we have lost not so much one who posed for our amusement or spoke *ore rotundo* for our instruction as a near friend and an elder brother.

F. M. B.

A QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITY.

HE was always called "Professor," though one would be apt to question his right to the title, as no university had ever bestowed it upon him. It was the result of Mrs. Terwilliger's veneration for his art, and had been so long in use that people quite ignored his real name,—forgot it, in fact. But a close inspection of the card tacked upon the outside of his door revealed to an inquiring mind that he was Herr Albrecht Müller, whose business in life it was to encourage young talent upon the violin, and also to furnish "music for parties." For the rest, his greatest glory consisted in being one of the second violins in the renowned Symphony Orchestra,—where, by the way, he was never known in his professorial capacity.

He was very weary. He had not appreciated the full extent of his weariness until he reached the steps of his boarding-house; there his fatigue asserted itself, and he paused to rest—to take breath—before he entered and climbed the stairs to his room beneath the eaves. He looked about him grimly.

The house faced on a narrow street which, years before, when the city was in its youth, had been one of the fashionable quarters; it still retained some slight traces of its former dignity, discernible even yet through its cloak of decay. Far removed from the bustling thoroughfares, it had offered no allurements to commerce, and had lain there forgotten, beyond the din of traffic, growing shabbier as time went on. The very stones in the centre of the street seemed to utter their protest at this neglect; huge holes gaped here and there, black and uncanny in the uncertain light of the rickety lamp at the corner and the far-away shining of the stars. The tide of prosperity had swept aside, leaving this little memento of earlier days stranded and forlorn. There was something not wholly unlovely in its altered appearance. Artists came occasionally to sketch the quaint iron railings on either side of the low, shallow stoops, and some of them made pictures of the house at the farther end, where an odd scroll-work of iron still held the tottering frame of a lantern aloft. The glass had long since been shattered, and the empty aperture looked like some giant mouth distorted with scornful mirth at the pitiful jest of Time. But otherwise the street was given over to its occupants,—apprentices, struggling clerks, men and women earning their daily bread. The brick sidewalk felt the passing of many feet as they fared forth in the morning and returned at night, some buoyant with hope, some leaden with despair.

Sometimes the professor would look at the houses on the opposite side of the way and fall to thinking of the secrets they might disclose had they the gift of speech,—the joys and sorrows of the past, the joys and sorrows of the present, so near akin, even in their remoteness. How much was hidden away behind those defaced exteriors! He used to speculate about it often, and wonder at the elements of tragedy and comedy the little street contained. But to-night it seemed singularly deficient of either; it was very quiet and dark, and wrapped in slumber its entire length. The winter sky was massing up clouds for a storm, and the few stars shining through the white drifts looked sleepily down upon the scene.

The professor dragged himself wearily up the steps, and stopped to take his key from his pocket. It was a rather arduous task. First he had to put his violin-case down tenderly, and then the roll of music which he had carried beneath his arm. He had next to unbutton the garment called by courtesy an overcoat—though it was not suggestive of much warmth—and slip aside the ends of the woollen scarf, before he could reach his undercoat; that unfastened, he felt in his vest-pocket for the key, breathing a sigh of relief as his fingers closed on the steel rim and he drew it out. He fitted it into the lock and turned it carefully, fearful of disturbing his neighbors' repose. It took him some time to change it from the outside to the inside of the door and to pick

up his belongings; he was usually slow in all his motions, but to-night, on account of his fatigue, his fingers seemed half paralyzed. As he entered the hall the light that was dimly burning flickered uncertainly in the draught of cold air. It was like some feeble human hope fluttering at the approach of disaster; but, the door once closed, it let its little shining accentuate the meagreness of its surroundings. The professor looked at the rack, and, seeing that all the lodgers were in, turned out the gas and groped his way to the stairs.

They seemed interminable to his tired fancy; his knee, which always troubled him in cold weather, was pricking him now with keen twinges. How long ago it was since he had become lame!—a good five-and-forty years, and he was turned fifteen then; he could remember, as clearly as if it were yesterday, the time when he had slipped on the ice and had broken his knee-cap. Five-and-forty years ago, and it still ached,—more poignantly than his heart, sometimes! He crept softly on through the quiet house, up and up, until his head grew a trifle dizzy.

At the foot of the last flight of stairs he sat down to rest; he had not the strength just then to go any farther. He was so tired: he had never felt quite so tired before. Surely he was growing old. He smiled a little tremulously in the darkness, and his hand relaxed its hold on the violin-case; he laid it on the step above him and put his arm about it caressingly.

"Some day we'll have to say good-by, dear love," he whispered, in German. "Will it be soon, I wonder?"

Through the years of his lonely life he had fallen into the habit of talking to his violin as to a friend; he did not recognize his lack of human companionship with such a trusty comrade at hand. He sat still, thinking, for a few moments; then he went on:

"How glorious the music was to-night! I had but to close my eyes, and, behold, I was in the very heaven of heavens. I could feel thy face just beneath my own, and hear thy voice mingling with those angelic strains. It is never to be forgotten! But didst thou notice that Schott played false? I wanted to tell him, but he prides himself so much on being a first fiddle, he will brook no interference from a second. As if I didn't know how the passage goes: tum, tum, tum, then D flat, like this,—not natural, as Schott plays it."

He hummed the air several times, but so low that if the occupants of the rooms opening on the hall had been stirring they must have thought him some little mouse singing away in the wainscot. The slight noise he made was quite drowned by the voluminous sounds that proceeded from Mr. Green's apartment, where that worthy man was earning the just reward of his labors.

The little professor did not move from his place; the warmth he felt from his outer coat filled him with a pleasurable sense of comfort, his knee had ceased aching, and he even drowsed slightly. It was the first time that he had rested since early morning. It had been an unusually busy day for him, what with the lessons, the extra practising, the evening's concert, and after that the walk home from the upper part of the city. The blocks had seemed endless as he trudged

along; the night was bitterly cold, but he could not hurry, for fear of slipping on the icy pavements. The shops were closed on either side of the way, and the whole avenue was deserted, save for a car that now and then passed north or south, its bells jingling a tantalizing refrain. Above his head thundered an occasional elevated train, causing the street to vibrate with its great roar, its lights glancing at him like so many friendly eyes until they were lost in the distance. But not for a moment did he regret the action that had enriched a beggar and had deprived him of the means of riding. He needed the walk, he told himself: he was getting lazy, and forgetful that exercise is good for every one. It was a satisfaction, though, to be at home at last; he was so glad to rest. He took a certain amount of indolent delight in loitering on the stairs, though he knew he ought to go to his room; but it was a pleasure, just then, not to do as he ought. Duty is a grim taskmistress whom we take a childish enjoyment in thwarting whenever we can, heedless of the fact that she keeps a strict account and makes us pay in the end. He went on with his dreaming; he was back in the concert-room, with its glittering curve of lights, and the wonderful music was filling the air about him. Suddenly he started, as though aroused by some unseen hand, and rubbed his eyes sleepily. The hall was very dark, and he could distinguish nothing in the soft obscurity that lay like a mantle everywhere. He put out his hand and felt the balustrade; it gave an answering creak to his touch. He knew then where he was,—on the third floor of Mrs. Terwilliger's select boarding-house. He understood that thoroughly. What he did not understand so well was the strange odor that was creeping insidiously into the passage-way. There were often questionable odors in the Terwilliger mansion,—musty odors, and odors from the culinary department, in which the onion frequently battled with the cooking-butter for the ascendancy. But this was different. It was gas,—decidedly gas. The professor recognized that immediately. Evidently some one had forgotten to turn off his light and it had blown out. The solution was of the simplest.

The professor tiptoed down the hall and sniffed inquiringly at the two doors there; then he walked slowly back and placed his face against the door opposite the stairs. He drew in a deep breath; the trouble did not come from there. He turned to the last,—the little front hall bedroom. Through the crack there proceeded an unmistakable gaseous smell. Within it was dark and very still. His first impulse was to arouse the sleeper, but the next moment—though he wondered at himself for so doing—he took a match from his pocket and lighted it quickly. As it flared up, he bent down to the sill and inspected it closely. The house was very old, and, in settling, many of the doors had ceased to fit in their frames. He had often noticed, on his way up-stairs in the daytime, the broad streak of light that came from this particular threshold. Now, as he looked, he saw something white there; the little flickering flame went out, and, in the darkness that followed, he ran his fingers along the wide crack. They came in contact with a substance like linen.

His mind, usually so slow in its workings, leaped like a flash to a

conclusion which almost prostrated him. It was a towel that lay along the aperture. He pushed it back fiercely. It had not fallen there by accident: it had been placed there. The horror of the situation overcame him for the moment; he tugged at the scarf at his throat as though it choked him and prevented his breathing. The person within the room was courting death. Who was it? The little professor covered his eyes with his hand and tried to think. Quick! quick! who was it? Not Martin; not Jordan; not Miss Fitch, the dressmaker——Ah!

He fell back against the wall, half stunned by the thought. It was that young girl—he did not know her name—that pale-faced, sad-eyed girl who wore the pitiful rusty black dress. She never had a word to say to anybody; she was like some mournful little ghost slipping in and out among them. Once he had spoken to her as they met in the hall. There was something in her face that reminded him forcibly of his girl-love who had died so many years before across the seas, and he wanted to be friendly for Gretchen's sake. But his overtures had frightened the girl; she had hardly responded to his commonplace remarks. The dumb look of pain in her dark eyes had haunted him throughout the day. It was as if she had met with nothing but rebuffs. Just Gretchen's age,—not older, surely not older,—and so alone and weary, and now—— He could imagine her lying there, with her sad eyes looking out into the darkness for the approach of that grim Presence who should bring her peace. He put his hand on the knob softly; he would not frighten her if he could help it. His pity made him divinely tender.

"Fräulein!" he whispered, "Fräulein!"

There was no answer within,—nothing but an appalling stillness. He recoiled, trembling, uncertain how to act. He could break the door open, he knew, and call for aid; but something—some unaccountable feeling of delicacy, some shrinking from exposing her pitiful secret—prevented him. As he lingered there, a low sob fell on his ears. She was not dead, then.

"*Gott sei dank, nicht todt—nicht todt!*" He was in time, he could save her yet.

But how? But why? He stood irresolute. What right had he to meddle with fate, to prolong this struggle with life in one who had found it so distasteful in the spring-time of her youth? During the few weeks of her stay in the house he had seen hope die slowly out of her face and despair settle like a pall in its stead. She had tried—God knows she had tried—her bravest and her best, and she had failed. Who was he that he should condemn her to stay amid the dangers and temptations of the great city? What right had he to take from her the comfort that Death would bring on his dark wings? Why should he seek to defeat her object? Where did responsibility begin and irresponsibility end?

His brain was in a whirl as the opposing voices clashed within him. Suddenly, out of the tumult, like a guiding star, came one thought. Clearly it was his duty to protest against her action. He knew that if he could arouse her by saying, "Child, be patient yet a little longer and

your life will be happy," he would not hesitate a moment, he would hasten gladly to her rescue. The imperativeness of the duty was not altered though instead of those words of cheer he must say, "Child, you have no right to push the cup aside; you must drink it; you must take the bitter and forego the sweet. You must live on to old age, if that is His will—uncomplainingly, bravely, until His hand places 'Finis' at the foot of your life's page."

That was the message intrusted to him, and the pity of it was that in his narrow sphere he would be powerless to aid her overmuch. In a short time their paths must diverge; he could only help and hearten her a little of the way. His own grasp on the world was growing less firm; he felt a strange thrill of exultation at the thought, for he was often very weary. Her act had been prompted in a moment of rashness; of that he was sure. He was conscious, with the wisdom the years had brought him, that sorrow to the young is known as despair, while later in life it is called by its true name and is not unbearable. He felt very tenderly towards her, not condemning her in the least. Who was he, that he should judge any one? The dreary hopelessness of her lot was like a leaf out of his own past. He had known a similar temptation. The remembrance of that time, when, lonely, poor, heart-broken, he had longed to end his life, thrilled him keenly. It made it easy for him to understand and pity. Something had saved him then, —the voice of his violin,—and it was left for him to save this young creature now. That was his duty. He must bring her back to a life of suffering, it might be, through which she could gain her content even as he had gained his.

It was all clear to him in that moment,—clear by some heaven-sent inspiration. His course of action was unrolled like a panorama; there was no cause for further hesitancy. What was required of him was to turn the gas off from the entire house. He knew just where to go. It was to meet the need of this time, and for no other reason, that he had spent a good half-hour with the plumber in the cellar only the week before. He had told himself then, in excuse for his idling, that it was because the man had come from over-seas and could give him news of the home of his childhood. Now he knew otherwise. The little girl should live, and it would seem to her that it was God's doing: she would not feel so lonely after that. Well, it *was* God's doing: He often employs humble instruments to work for Him.

The professor, despite his sixty years and his lame knee, ran swiftly and noiselessly down the stairs. Not a person in the house must know his errand, or why it was prompted. It was only the work of a few minutes; but the groping up again in the darkness was another matter: the old knee always rebelled at going up-stairs.

When the professor came back from his lessons the next afternoon, he saw people moving in and out of the little hall bedroom by whose door he had lingered through the grim watches of the night. That door was still closed when he had gone to his work in the morning, and his heart gave a sickening bound to see it open now. He moved unsteadily towards it and caught a glimpse of the meagre interior,—

the strip of cheap gray carpet, the battered pine bureau, the iron bedstead, and, beyond, the window with its small panes of yellowing glass. He stopped on the threshold, his face white and trembling.

"*Das Fräulein,*" he stammered; "*wo ist das Fräulein?*"

Mrs. Terwilliger turned. "Frawline!" she repeated, in a bewildered voice. "Oh! yes. Why, she's gone. 'Bout noon a middle-aged woman come an' took her: she was a cousin from the country, an' her only kin. They'd had some fallin' out, but they was willin' enough to make it up, I can tell you; any one would 'a' thought they was lovers, the way they kissed an' cried over each other. The woman had b'en searchin' everywheres, an' it was a good thing she come when she did, for that girl had 'bout got to the end o' her rope. I never saw sech a peaked-lookin' critter as she was to-day. She didn't seem quite right in her mind, neither; she kep' sayin' over an' over ag'in it was a mirycle, an' she was so wicked, an' then she'd break down an' sob. An' all the time her cousin was soothin' her an' callin' her little love-names. It kinder made me want to cry myself. But, laws' sakes! she'll be happy now. I wish the rest of us could have things smoothed out so easy. I remember my brother——"

The little professor did not wait a moment longer; his landlady's personal reminiscences had no charm for him. He felt wonderfully buoyant and young as he climbed the stairs to his room, though his knee dragged in painful protest and he could hardly see for the tears in his eyes. But they were tears of gratitude, and he kept murmuring to himself, "Thank God! thank God!"

Imogen Clark.

ON CHRISTES DAY.

GOOD people alle, on Christes Day,
Dispatch dissensions farre away,
Forgive your foes, united be
In bonds of God-like amitie!

Good people alle, when Goddes Sonne
Came down to save us every one,
Came down to rescue us from wrath,
Should we not follow in His path?

Good people alle, good grace, good cheer,
Give of your plenty farre and neare;
The best mandate of love obey,
Be brothers alle on Christes Day!

Susie M. Best.

HERBERT BEERBOHM TREE.

A STUDY.

AMERICA has seen several of the notable actors of England, and she has approved with pence and praise. She has yet to see, and she will see soon, Mr. H. Beerbohm Tree; and I venture to prophesy for him a hospitality which will spring not alone from the generous courtesy which the American people extend to the illustrious, but from a sound intrinsic appreciation of a distinguished and powerful actor. It is the common thing to say of Mr. Tree that he is singularly versatile; but the word *versatile* has, to me, always, the feeling of smartness, of juggling with the talents, as it were; it does not express continuity, consistency, the force of a masterful temperament; and the force of a masterful temperament—searching, glowing, attractive—is the thing concerning this outstanding man which should be sent illustratively through this article. I want to give the idea of a man who has an individuality which must be taken into large account; an idiosyncrasy in his art which is at once a style and an impulse; a stage manner which is not a mannerism even when it comes at times near to the fantastical, but is rather a kind of idiom of—shall I say the word? —of genius.

Now that I have used this word *genius* I am glad, for it is a thing so easily said, and so hard to justify; sanely used it imports so much, carelessly it punishes him who uses it. It does not scathe, it shames; it does not cry out, it points to where its spirit works to subject men and women, learned and unlearned, to its charm. There lies the heart of it all. Genius has something to give those who know much and those who know little. Subjection to its ineffable charm is in us all; it is only a question of measure,—whether it be the small, sweet piping of the shepherd in Arcady or the affluent, intrepid harmony of the gods. In brief, the peasant comes under influence of the great artist through some one open door, as well as the great statesman through many clear, long-travelled avenues. The young lad of nine or ten may not understand the meaning or the force of some great poem that he reads, but if he have one tiny natural faculty of taste he falls under the mastery of the charm, he knows not why or wherefore. It is the atmosphere, the spirit, the presence of the artist, that holds him.

And it is here I wish to touch upon what was especially in my mind when I used the word *genius* in writing of Mr. Beerbohm Tree. The word that signifies it all is presence. By presence I do not mean a matter of manner, though that is important enough, but the general effect of a personality, the vital influence which produces effects by simply being, not acting. It is that persuasive something which fills a room, a place; which bulks materially almost as much as it suggests. To suggest more definitely: Great men—really great—produce effects unconsciously by what scientists call catalysis, the action of presence.

One feels Napoleon filling the stage of Europe, one regards him in the mind as an enormous personality ; he is large physically in the relations we arrange between him and Europe. It is, after all, much a matter of mind. Mr. Tree himself touches upon this in his well-written, pungent, and wise lecture on "The Imaginative Faculty," delivered before the Royal Institution in May, 1893. With very much else that is potent, he says,—speaking of the actor,—"By the aid of his imagination he becomes the man, and behaves unconsciously as the man would or should behave; this he does instinctively rather than from any conscious study, for what does not come spontaneously may as well not come at all. Even the physical man will appear transformed," etc. . . . "The actor, even though he be peasant-born, will be able by the power of his imagination to acquire the rare gift of distinction."

These are a couple of paragraphs from one of the sanest little books I know ; for it is written by a man who has a gift of penetration and perspicacity, who is much more—let us be thankful—of the artist than of the scholar, and yet who has culture enough to make his poetic insight tell for all that it is worth. One has heard so much of "scholarly readings" and "dignified interpretation" that there is danger, while admiring these most commendable things, of forgetting that with a little elocution the college professor may be scholarly and dignified in reading "Hamlet," or, let us say, "The Dancing Girl." "Hamlet" being for the closet as well as for the stage, it may pass to the cultured, —the college professor's reading ; but imagine the gentleman trying to be scholarly and dignified with Monsieur the Duke of Guisebury! "Hamlet" often clothes the actor with a kind of eloquence, lent by our own imagination and the serene glory of Shakespeare's lines ; but it is the actor who has in him the real thing, that throws a charm—and in Mr. Tree's acting how great a charm !—about a character not fascinating in itself, and gives a distinction to dialogue not in itself distinguished, as Americans will see when they watch Mr. Tree play this part of the Duke of Guisebury. They will see also in his playing of "Hamlet" how much he depends upon himself as a sensitive physical machine, governed by a singularly poetic temperament, for the general human effect of the character, as against the attempts of some notable men to be distinguished in certain portions of the play and epic altogether, thereby making "Hamlet" a play-house for fine readings, splendid elocution, and occasional outbursts of passion. There is in Mr. Tree's temperament a subtle eerie quality, entirely his own, elusive to him who would imitate its signs, often thrilling, now and then fantastical, here and there reaching *diablerie*, and in all richly endowing his acting with force, color, manner, and—shall I say it?—unexpectedness. You can guess what most actors will do in given situations ; you cannot guess by what singular, sometimes masterly, touch Mr. Tree will make a situation powerful.

Possibly it will be the touch of total inaction, of an apparent arrest of every function of movement and purpose,—the seeming numb silence of mind and body. One of his latest plays, "A Bunch of Violets," affords me an evidence of this particular thing. In the third act, when

all the schemes of the central figure have gone agley, his villany discovered, his wife and child vanished, ruin and vile shame staring him in the face, he—he does nothing. That is it; there is the secret force of the scene: no melodrama, no moaning, no trepidation, no violence of manner or words, no distortion of sense or sentiment to produce an unusual stage effect, but something silent, stricken, amazed, dumb, distressfully awry: a guilty man, having played big games and lost, paralyzed as he faces the future. So Mr. Tree presents him, sitting haggard and stony; and the effect is much finer than the play itself gives warrant for. That is something of what I mean by the action of presence: the inner man, the imaginative, the being with a temperament, producing effects by the sheer power to fill the stage—that is, to fill the eye and the receptive sense of an audience. The great actor has this quality always, for he has that distinctiveness, that outstanding something, which attracts. Salvini has it to an uncommon degree, as any will testify who has seen him in that one great scene in "The Outlaw," where inaction is his pathetic *tour de force;* Mr. Irving has it, as all grant who have seen him in "Becket;" Mr. Edwin Booth had it.

There is a good deal of folly talked about actors sinking themselves in their parts. "He is always Mr. —— himself," has been said of more than one distinguished actor of our time. Now, it is only the undistinctive, the commonplace man who can always cover up his artistic identity: he has nothing to cover. But the artist who has a personality can deceive the eye only when the dress, the disguise, the make-up in itself—as, say, in "King Lear"—is itself a disguise. But in a part like Hamlet, or Malvolio, or Benedick, who can achieve personal extinction save the colorless fellow? Each notable actor represents character through the expression of his own physical machine and artistic temperament, and the part he plays is always colored by that. Were ever two great Othellos alike? two great Hamlets? two great Lears? two great Macbeths? Let us leave to the actor the accent of his personality on the part he plays: it will be there, whether we do so or not. I say these things because it has sometimes been urged against Mr. Tree, as against Mr. Irving, that he has mannerisms,—that "we always know it's Tree." They want him to do the superhuman thing, in playing his exquisite Beau Austin or his touching, fanciful Gringoire to be as little palpable in his personality as in playing the strong, weird, but not notable Issachar, or Falstaff, where he is stuffed out of all semblance, and, naturally, adds to the "stuffing" by the force of his imagination and by certain physical tricks in the game of acting. I say *tricks* as I would speak of an artist using a certain feint of color to produce an illusion,—a really difficult and meritorious thing.

As to this power of the imagination to color, to achieve differences, but very delicate differences, to, as it were, make one character resemble another, so as to be taken for it, and yet to render them distinct, Mr. Tree gave a brilliant example in "A Man's Shadow," in which he played Luversan and Laroque. I shall never forget the performance: several visits to the Haymarket Theatre while Mr.

Tree was playing it in 1889 make that sure. It is as subtle, weird, and delicately diabolical a bit of acting as one shall easily see, having that singular nervous yet restrained intensity that, I make bold to say, is possessed by very few on the English stage; and one of that very few is Mr. Edward Henley, an actor well known in America,—whether as well prized as he ought to be, I cannot say. You shall find the same quality, in varying degree, in Mr. Tree's Macari of "Called Back," in the fascinating and yet revolting Jim the Penman, and in "Captain Swift," which, to my mind, is one of the most notable plays within the limits of drawing-room melodrama produced in a long day.

There are few living actors whose range is so wide, and who play so admirably within the range. I should be sorry to suggest that Mr. Tree can play everything, for temperament and physique set as severe limits to the actor's capacity as temperament and style of technique do to an artist's. One can scarcely have imagined Mr. Edwin Booth as the sweating, roaring rake Falstaff, or in the valiant bounce and brag of Henry V., and one may take leave to doubt that Mr. Tree has a keen desire to appear as Julius Cæsar or Napoleon; at least he has wise distinct choice of characters suitable to him, and he makes it. But to think of "The Red Lamp" (which he produced in 1887) one imagines him instantly in the grim, ironical humor and piercing keenness of Demetrius, and one might easily have prophesied an interpretation of Lord Illingworth in "A Woman of No Importance" far surpassing its intrinsic value as a character. Man of the world as he is, brilliant conversationalist, with a subtle imagination playing over all he does and says, Mr. Tree touched off Lord Illingworth with a devilish, glacial coolness and *sang-froid* which carried to their goal every time the smart and—it will be conceded—pungent satire of Mr. Oscar Wilde's dialogue. It seems to me that England has sent over no actor to America who should appeal so much to the temperament of the American people as Mr. Tree. He has that fine, nervous force, that swiftness in projecting a sensation, that flexibility of power, that hot dry vigor of sense—in control—which is possessed by the Americans and by the French more than by any other race or people. I need not, should not, speak of those social gifts, those fascinating personal qualities, which make him, apart from his distinguished position in the artist world, a welcome and sought-for figure in high places.

It would be expected that Mr. Tree with his deep imagination should feel an impulse to put Ibsen's plays upon the stage,—plays in which the searching philosophy of life and potent logic of the emotions show out in language that never wastes, that is simple almost to commonplaceness, yet full of poetry, and topped by great situations when the movement of the figures is quiet; the whole force lying in the powerful dilemma or the inevitable end. And so Mr. Tree has appeared lately in "An Enemy of the People," reaping, I am bound to say, no particular harvest of success as to the popularity of the play, though much appreciation as to his playing. Yet one need not dwell upon this point, for, somehow, most people acting in Ibsen's plays have been more praised than have been the

plays themselves. More subtle, to my mind, more poetic, more fanciful and deep, was Mr. Tree's playing of the Grandfather in Maeterlinck's "L'Intruse," for here came out again that most notable touch of the eerie of which I have written above, as was the case also with his playing of the social devil in "The Tempter," though the gentleman himself, as Mr. Henry Arthur Jones showed him forth, was an amazing combination of Dr. Watts, Goethe, Marlowe, George Meredith, and the Society of Stereotyped Smartness. For my own part, I feel that Mr. Tree has yet to play his greatest character. Where it will come from I know not, but that it will give an opportunity for a revelation of fascinating *diablerie*, of mercurial mood and fancy, of the fire and cloud of good and evil, of inexhaustible *finesse*, unbelievable sweetness, and delicate malice, I have no moment's doubt. I conceive him in a character subtly bad, with instincts and logic declaring for good, placing his career and life on one wicked hazard, which, winning, should start him on the highway of a new and better life, or, losing, send him baffled to the devil. I do not wish to hint that Mr. Tree has not done big work; I know that he has; but he has not done his biggest, and I know that he will when the real chance comes. Meanwhile, the American public will have a chance to enjoy the most admirable, sometimes great, acting of a man who has earned his place beside Mr. Irving in the eyes of the British public, by a career as varied, as consistent, and as devoted as an artist's should be.

Only forty-one years old, Mr. Tree has been on the stage professionally seventeen years, yet he played, as a distinguished amateur, at least a hundred and fifty parts before he appeared as Grimaldi at the Globe Theatre in 1877. Farce, farcical comedy, melodrama, comedy, drama, tragedy,—he has nourished, enlarged, made flexuous and rich the higher qualities of his maturer acting by the full exercise of all his emotional and imaginative faculties. "Where's the Cat?" "Little Miss Muffet," "The Private Secretary" (which he created), "Forget-me-Not," "Breaking a Butterfly," "Helena and Troas," "The Pompadour," "Wealth," "The Village Priest," "The School for Scandal," "Hamlet," and as Iago and King John,—what a range of character is here! He has played "L'Aventurière" in French, and this year he has played "Hamlet" in German in Berlin. Adventurous as he thus seems, Mr. Tree has the one thing that justifies daring: he has the power to "pull things off;" he has the convincing good fortune—for want of a less modest word—of success. Americans are true lovers of the drama, more delicately, if not more widely, appreciative than the British; and, as I have said, the irony, the weird humor, the elusive force, the well-balanced intensity of Mr. Tree's acting will win the cheerful and general applause of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and those other cities "of large measure and infinite capacity." Mr. Tree's acting has romance, has buoyant fantasy; his Mistress Art has a face of light, color, warmth, has the sadness of Penelope, the abandon of Ariadne, the passion of Aphrodite; and behind all is a distinguished temperament, which plays its strong part in the rejoicing influences of modern life,—in its commendable recreations.

I cannot close this imperfect study—note I would better call it—than by quoting Mr. Tree's own words, from the lecture I have before mentioned. Speaking of "the highest achievements of Art," he says, "Its loftiest mission is to preserve for us, amid the din and clash of life, those illusions which are its better part," and so on. In Mr. Tree's acting, and in the refined, poetic, and deeply appreciative acting of Mrs. Tree (singularly clever in "A Bunch of Violets," exquisite as Ophelia), these illusions have their way with us, gilding, as Mr. Tree says it, "old age with the after-glow of youth."

Gilbert Parker.

A PRODIGAL FRIEND.

THE horizon had narrowed to a circle of gray; the fields were gray, and the sky was gray with threatened snow. At intervals a furious wind swept wisps of yellow straw and shrivelled leaves over the frozen road.

The minister stopped on the outskirts of the town to exchange a few words with a woman leaning in the door of her cottage:

"The mill closed early to-day."

"We made half-time."

"An extra holiday won't hurt; and to-morrow's Christmas."

"It's no odds to me," said the woman, without change of expression on her heavy sullen face.

He struck with his staff the jagged edge of a flint frozen firmly in the ground. There was something he wished to say and found difficult. He knew his mill people; they had their conventionalities, not to be lightly transgressed. It was not easy to speak of an affair of the heart. He generalized.

"This is a time," he said, didactically, "when old scores ought to be forgiven and discharged in full; when no wrong should be remembered except to be repaid with loving-kindness."

"I've got no wrong to lay up against anybody," interrupted Martha. She looked down into his eyes until he turned them away and began again to strike at the flint.

"At this time in particular, if Providence should send across our path her—one who has dealt us our sharpest blow, who has deceived us most treacherously, we should forgive and help: we should aid and succor this person in distress for the sake of the Babe of Bethlehem."

Martha interrupted again:

"I don't know of any such."

He looked at her reproachfully; he was a shy man, and dared come no nearer the subject than she allowed. He bade her good-day, and went down the windy road. He thought he knew her story,

—that some years ago she had been betrayed at once by love and friendship.

She went into the house and sat down before the fire. Her thought lingered on the picture called up by the minister's last words,—the Babe of Bethlehem. She did not know much about babies.

Her rooms were neat and comfortable; preparation for the Christmas feast stood upon a table by the kitchen window.

There came a quick step upon the threshold, a lifting of the latch, and a neighbor entered. She was a small, thin woman, with a shawl drawn closely over her head and across the lower part of her face, so that only a pair of keen eyes and heavy brows were visible.

"It's beginnin' to snow," she said, "an' it's gittin' late, but I jus' dropped everything an' run up to see if you'd heard the news."

Martha knew what she had come to tell; she had expected it for five years. She drew a rocking-chair upon the hearth and bade her visitor sit close to the fire before she asked,—

"What news?"

The woman threw back her shawl and held out her hands to the blaze.

"As sure as you're alive, Nan Snell's come back and's down in that old shanty of Foutz's over fornenst the woods road. Tom Meirs seen her. She had a bundle 'most as big as herself, an' seemed like she wanted to git out of his sight. I should think she would—her! I should think she'd be ashamed to show her face here."

"I don't know as she need be afeard of me," said Martha.

"If I was you I'd put on my shawl and I'd go down to Foutz's an' give her a piece of my mind that she wouldn't soon forget. *She* put it in his head."

"'Tain't my way to multiply words."

"Well, you know best."

She gathered her shawl over her shoulders and stood up.

"Your bakin' and everything done? I don't begin mine till after supper, Christmas eve. I'm bakin' a lot for the children. An' you got a turkey? Well," she added, a trifle enviously, "we'd have turkey too, if there wasn't so many mouths to fill, but with seven head and only one out of the lot old enough to go to the mill, what's a body to do? I got a roast o' beef. I'll have my roast o' beef on Christmas if I have to borry a pan to roast it in; if you got one handy 'at you could spare I'd be 'bliged to you."

Martha took an iron pan from the closet and offered it.

"I guess that'll do. You ain't got a bit o' drippin' you don't want yourself? No? It don't matter."

She grasped her shawl under her chin and went out, but thrust her head in through the door to say,—

"If you take my advice you'll go down to Foutz's an' give Nan Snell the tongue-lashin' she deserves."

Martha watched her out of sight, then she stood on a chair in front of the cupboard and reached back on the topmost shelf for a china sugar-bowl. She took off the lid and drew out a folded paper,—her certificate of marriage.

The minister and the mill people who made sure of all her story had not known that it was her husband, and not her lover, who went off with Nan Snell.

The mill people were secretive, devious in their ways, especially as to ways matrimonial. They found a singular satisfaction in consummating marriages and in keeping them hidden as long as possible. In regard to this the minister preached and reasoned in vain.

Martha went to the window and spelled over every word before she pinned the paper in the bosom of her gown. She wrapped herself in her shawl and left the house.

Snow had begun to fall through the dusk, to be whirled away into a gray shadow which claimed the long hard road.

As she went on in the teeth of the wind, one hand holding her shawl beneath her chin, the other grasping hard the paper, her thought took on a singular duality, changing suddenly and involuntarily from her own experience to all she had ever heard of the story of the Nativity. Instead of sad fields stretching on either hand, of trees rising shadowy through the snow, of brown leaves in frozen ditches, she saw by turns Nan Snell's frightened face and the vision of a child on the straw of a manger. She felt swift alternations of bitterness and tenderness.

The cottage stood back from the highway; it was a deserted place, given over to decay or the occupancy of an occasional tramp.

Martha stood for a moment listening, her hand raised as if she would lift the latch. There was a low sound from within, a babbling murmur. She went around to the window and looked through a broken blind—upon the materialization of the vision that had clung to her through the last few hours.

The corners of the room were in darkness, but a fire of dry branches made a brilliant glow upon the hearth. In the light and warmth, upon a heap of yellow straw, lay a young child. He had kicked away his garments; his naked limbs gleamed whitely.

Martha covered her eyes with her hand; she hesitated between a beautiful superstition and an unwelcome reality. She had not thought of Nan Snell as the mother of a child. A fiercer jealousy than she had ever known suggested itself. There was one more motive for punishing the false friend; but there was another, mightier still, for withholding her hand.

When she looked again, the baby's mother was standing over him, with one of the discarded garments hanging loosely from her clasp.

Martha stepped upon the threshold and tried the latch; the door was fastened from within. She set her knee against it, and the bolt yielded.

By the light of the fire she saw Nan Snell's face as she had known she would see it,—guilty, entreating, with a look of ineffective resistance in the blue eyes. In the presence of the child she could not put into words what she had intended to say. Beneath her shawl her hand closed over the certificate in her bosom. She stood with her back against the door, a woman past thirty, her history in her face.

Nan spoke first:

"I'm a honest woman; never you think but I'm a honest woman. He married me in Richfield. I've got my paper safe enough." She laid her hand upon her breast. "I can hold up my head with the best of you."

She broke down and cried, covering her face with the little ragged petticoat which she still held in her hand.

"Oh, Marthy, Marthy, Marthy!"

Martha did not move. She was back in the days when she had taken Nan the waif to her home.

Outward expression of tenderness was an impossibility to Martha. The other had come of different blood from that of the stolid mill people; a softer strain made it easy for her to kiss and clasp. The remembrance of these blandishments overwhelmed her; she felt Nan's arms about her shoulders, Nan's lips upon her throat. Body and soul acknowledged how much Nan had been—was even yet—loved, and the singular unreality with which her imagination invested the child helped to charm away the bitterness of recollection.

"If anybody's done as wrong as me," said Nan, brokenly, "there's a punishment for 'em,—a punishment that'll last forever."

She came close to Martha and touched a fold of her gown.

"I can't ask God to forgive me till you do."

Seeing that she was not repulsed, she crept beneath Martha's shawl and reached up in the old way, but humbly, to press her lips against her throat.

"I won't ask God to forgive me till you do."

After a moment Martha pushed her away and pointed to the fire, which had sunk to a heap of embers:

"The fire's gettin' low; it'll be cold enough in here after a bit for him—with no clothes on, too. Where's your wood?"

Nan left the room. Martha unpinned the certificate from the bosom of her gown and ran to the hearth; she lifted the baby from the straw and forced the paper between his fingers.

"What difference does it make to anybody?" she said, below her breath. "Nobody ever knew but him and the preacher and me, and they're both dead. Who cares now?"

She raised the baby high over the hearth.

"Drop it! drop it!" she cried, fiercely, as he kept fast hold of the folded sheet; "drop it, before I think of things that'll make me take it back."

It fluttered down upon the embers, flared in an eager flame, and turned from a scorched shrivelled thing to a shred of silvery ash, which a few minutes later Nan dissipated forever with an armful of snowy wood.

Night had fallen when Martha left the house; snow lay ankle-deep upon the ground. The wind brought snatches of music from the ringing belfry of the church beyond the fields, and all the stormy way was glorified as by a vision.

S. Elgar Benet.

TO THE NEW YEAR.

WAS it forth from the flakes of drifting snow,
As they ceaselessly hurry them to and fro,
Thou camest to-day, O white New Year?
Or out from the golden gates of Dawn
When an angel opened them wide, at morn,
Didst thou come this way, O bright New Year?

Was it forth from the realms of an unknown land,
Sent hither by touch of an unseen hand,
Thou camest to-day, O blest New Year?
Or out from the shades of the saddened past,
Where the Old Year cares are hid at last,
Hast thou come this way, O best New Year?

Was it down from the heaven that spreads above
And forth from the land of Eternal Love
Thou camest to-day, O benign New Year?
Is it into this world so stained by sin,
With thy spotless robe thou hast entered in,
And come to stay, O divine New Year?

Kathleen R. Wheeler.

BY TELEPHONE.

OFFICER Tim McCarthy was just preparing for his night watch at the Kickapoo police station. His preparations were quite simple. The foundations had been laid at Jim Sullivan's "sample-room" just around the corner, and the materials for a superstructure were contained in a peculiar flat bottle whose cork projected from the hip-pocket that was not occupied by his "billy." Other resources for the dull hours of the night were to be seen in the ends of four very long and black cigars that protruded from an upper vest-pocket. On the whole, when Officer McCarthy had got his feet comfortably elevated on the office desk and his cigar lighted, and had piled up by his side a copy of a pink paper supposed to be made specially for policemen, a dime novel written by "A New York Reporter" on the sensational crime of the day, and the latest copy of a penny New York journal also apparently made specially for policemen, he felt that there might be worse things in life than a turn at station duty, even for a sociable man. To be sure, if he had taken his regular beat at the "Flatiron" he would have been asked to drink as many glasses as even the thirstiest soul could desire, but, on the other hand, he would doubtless have had the labor of clubbing at least three "drunks" into a state of tranquillity

and acquiescence, and clubbing is severe exercise on a sultry July night when the thermometer has been climbing steadily up toward the hundreds all the afternoon and shows no signs at night of yielding any of the advantage gained while the sun was up. But with one's coat off and a big fan at hand one might exist very comfortably by the basement window in the office, in spite of the heat and the glare of the flickering gas-jets. Ordinarily he could make himself still more comfortable by taking his chair out-doors, but this night the chief had given strict orders not to leave the office for a moment and to keep a sharp outlook to see that no word was passed from outside to any of the prisoners. The reason for this rigor was that a bird of unusual rarity had been captured, a real professional burglar who probably belonged to a gang, and the chief wanted to keep him ignorant of the fate of the rest, so that he might be "worked" by the fear of state's evidence. The cells lay in the basement of the Kickapoo city hall, and were completely isolated from the outside world when a guard occupied the front office that led to the side of the hall from which the police department was approached.

Officer McCarthy had lighted his second cigar and had just started on a highly flavored story in the pink paper, which by the realistic pictures with which it was illustrated seemed to pertain to the seventh commandment, when the telephone over his head gave five sharp rings. With a sad but resigned look he laid aside the fascinating sheet, and, uncoiling from his luxurious position, took down the receiver of the telephone.

"Hello!" he shouted, in tones that to an experienced listener at the other end would correctly suggest a very red nose.

"Hello!" came back the dim ghost of an answer. "Is this the Kickapoo police station?"

"Yes. Who is this?"

"This is the *Brookfield Republican* talking. Can you tell me the name of the man you have in to-night for attempted burglary?"

At this precise instant, by a singular coincidence, a young man some eight miles away from Kickapoo broke into a long and violent fit of profanity. He was a very good-looking young man, with dark moustache and hair, and a general air of jauntiness and imperturbability which marked him as a newspaper man. He was sitting at the long-distance telephone of the *Brookfield Republican*, alternately holding the cup to his ear and then replacing it in its rack and madly turning the crank. At such times he fell to using language with such a strong and pervasive flavor of the hereafter that the girl at "Central" gently rebuked him for his emphatic speech. He had spent the greater part of the evening in a vain wrestle with the tricksy imps of the wire. There was just enough electricity in the air to make the diaphragms snap like castanets, and for some reason "Central" could not give him a metallic circuit, and the "induction" was so great that he could hear almost everything under the sun except what he was listening for. He called up the chairman of the Kickapoo street-lighting committee, and overheard instead an animated and picturesque discussion between a bereaved Hibernian lady and a grasping undertaker who was proposing

to charge her five dollars extra for taking his new hearse out in the mud. He called up the railroad station, and heard two fond mothers comparing cases of measles. And finally, when he had tried to ring up the police station, he had found the wire in use. It was then that "Central" first began to complain of his speech. The city editor also came to the closet, a mild-mannered man with a soft brown beard, and asked gently what had broken loose. For reply he got only a subdued "Shh——," for Hagg, the reporter, had just heard a ghostly whisper from somewhere in the great net-work of wires tell the Kickapoo police station, "This is the *Republican* talking." "The deuce it is!" muttered Hagg. "If it's some one trying to work a scoop there'll be trouble right off. See?" And he listened breathlessly to the mysterious conversation.

"It's th' burrglar ye want?" wheezed the red-nosed voice of the Kickapoo policeman. "Sure his name's John Callahan."

"Once more, please."

"John Callahan."

"Flanagan?"

"Callahan! C-a-l-l-a-h-a-n, Callahan. C for cat, you know. A, B, C."

"All right; John Cameron." Evidently the unknown speakers were having as much difficulty with the wire as Hagg had found, but after another more successful wrestle he heard the policeman say, in a relieved way,—

"That's right. John Callahan."

"And, by the way, can you tell me the name of the New York crook that is wanted at Kickapoo? We wished to make up a paragraph about him, and I can't find his name in our files." At the coolness of this statement on the part of the outsider Hagg's jaw dropped, and he was unable even to swear, which, in a newspaper man, argues a low state of vitality.

"James Lafferty," came the answer of the policeman.

"James Rafferty?"

"Lafferty; L for lobster, you know. H, I, J, K, L. Lafferty."

"James Lafferty; all right. Did you have anything else to-day?"

"Nothing at all; all quiet, very quiet." And the conversation ceased for a minute.

Then the voice of the unknown speaker asked,—

"Hagg is not in, is he?"

"That reporter fellow?" ("Reporter fellow, indeed!" snorted the person in question, indignantly.) "No, he has not been in this evening. Shall I ring you up when he comes?"

"No, never mind. I will leave a message for him, though. Have you a pencil handy? I am rather particular to get it straight."

"All right; go ahead."

"Just give your bird's name once more, won't you?" asked the unknown reporter before beginning on his dictation. The policeman once more bawled out the name of John Callahan.

"All right; I've got that straight now. Here goes. Just hand it to him when he comes in.—Don't get rattled—have you got that?"

"All right."

"Take things cool, and we'll do this job up in good shape.—Do you get that?"

"All right."

"I'll run down and meet you at the North Side."

"All right."

"About 3.30, and we'll fix this thing up right. Look sharp, Dick.—Got that, have you?" the telephone asked, after a moment's pause.

"All right."

"Very good: just read it over to me, will you? I'd like to make sure you have it all right."

At this modest request there were strong symptoms of rebellion. Officer McCarthy was not in an amiable mood by this time, but he had a manifest respect for the *Republican*, which had kindly refrained from giving a "descriptive write-up" of his efforts at climbing a tree while in a state of spirituous exaltation. After a little quiet grumbling he dutifully repeated the message from end to end.

"All right. Just give that to him, will you? Good-night."

"All right. Good-night."

There was a sharp little tinkle signifying that the conversation was over, and then another wild peal for "Central," and 808.5 was called again.

"Hello! Is this you, McCarthy?"

"Yes." (Very shortly.)

"Well, say, you needn't give that to Hagg. He has just come in, and we will fix it up. Much obliged. Good-night."

"All right. Good-night."

And the patrolman once more elevated his feet to the table, relighted his cigar, and proceeded with infinite labor—he was not a rapid reader—to find the place in his salacious history where he had left off. And so the night seemed to be passing very tranquilly at the Kickapoo police station.

The moment that this interesting telephonic conversation ceased, Barnabas Hagg began twisting violently at the telephone bell crank and calling out loudly for "Central."

"Who was that talking with 808.5?" he asked, when he had prevailed over the elements.

"I don't know. He was a *Republican* reporter. He was talking from Bramley."

"The deuce you say! Give me Bramley central."

A long ring.

"Hello! Is this Bramley central?"

"Yes."

"Who rang up the Kickapoo police station just now?"

"Dunno; that's in your exchange. The only call for Brookfield was from a public pay-station."

"What one?"

"403.3."

"Give me that."

"All right."

Ting-a-ling-ting.

"Hello! Is this Mr. Bradley?"

"Yes."

"All right. This is Hagg talking. Who called up Brookfield Central?"

"Just now, you mean?"

"Yes."

"I declare I don't know. He was a complete stranger to me."

"What sort of looking man?"

"Why, just an ordinary-looking fellow, about thirty-five, tall and slim, with darkish hair; that's all I remember. Perhaps my wife noticed him more."

"Just ask her, will you, please?"

A pause.

"My wife says he had a red scar under the right ear, and a sort of patch of white hair over the right temple. She thinks his teeth are false, because they are so white."

"All right. Much obliged. Good-night."

"Good-night."

Hagg took a moment to think before resuming his work. That some sort of scheme was being worked was evident. People do not, as a rule, call up police stations and pay out money for telephone tolls merely for fun and without any end in view. But what was that end? There was no scoop in it, so far as he could make out. It was hard to see what object any reporter could have in holding such a conversation. He was a pretty shrewd sort of fellow, and had done enough police reporting to have his wits tolerably well trained, but he was unable to hit upon anything that shed the least ray of light upon the mysterious conversation. He had a half-column of Kickapoo news to "clean up," and then had to run over the river to West Brookfield to report a fire and a drowning accident. It was after midnight when he had got hold of the facts and had put his stuff on the wires, and, as the cars had stopped long since, there was nothing for him to do but "shag" along home on foot, as the *Republican's* counting-room did not honor bills for livery service except on special and important missions. Somehow the cool night air, the fresh smell of the meadows, and the stimulus of the walk set his brain to work with such increased vigor that he had not gone above half a mile from the little country station when the solution of the whole case flashed upon him like an inspiration. He wasted a good half-minute in imprecations upon his stupidity. Then he groaned to think that he was four miles from home and twelve from Kickapoo, where he was urgently needed. He struck a match and looked at his watch. It lacked a quarter to one. There were still two hours and a half left. Much might be done in two hours and a half. He ran back the half-mile to the railroad station. The lights were out. The operator had gone. He was preparing to smash a window and climb in, when he caught a glimpse of a slim white form disappearing in the moonlight. He whistled shrilly on his fingers and ran in that direction. It was Miss Gates, the operator.

"It's too bad, Lizzy," he panted, "but I shall have to bother you again."

She was the most accommodating of operators, and after her first fright at seeing herself pursued had disappeared she went back to the office, and Hagg scribbled off the following:

"BROOKFIELD REPUBLICAN:

"Hold open. I have a fat thing, good for a column. In before four o'clock.

"HAGG."

He bade the operator good-night, and then he drew a long breath and prepared for work. He looked around for an instant, and then plunged into the dark in the direction of a livery-stable that he remembered having seen. A light was burning in the office, but no one was in sight. He rang the call-bell furiously, and then groped his way into the inner room, fragrant with horses and new-mown hay. A boy stumbled to his feet from a nest of buffalo robes, and Hagg shook him until he gradually woke up.

"Now then, young one," the reporter tersely remarked, pulling out something that rustled with a crisp, pleasant sound, "do you want to earn that?"

The boy's eyes sparkled in spite of their sleepiness.

"What is your fastest horse?"

"Joker."

"Well, get me Joker in a light dog-cart in—let me see, in five minutes, and you have this for your own."

He was awake by this time, and the way his fingers flew was something astonishing. He was a smart youth, and knew that reporters do not go driving for pleasure at that hour of the night. Joker sniffed and chewed at his crib as though surprised at the unusual hour for being taken out. In two minutes he was standing harnessed in the flickering lantern-light, a tall, lean, muscular bay, with mighty limbs and a wicked eye. In four minutes they had him in the dog-cart. Giving the boy his easily-earned fee, Hagg took the ribbons and twisted the robe about him for a start. Joker seemed to be in the mood for a race, but Hagg held him in till he got used to his pace and then let him out by degrees. He snorted and tossed his head and then settled down to a great twelve-mile stride. Almost in the twinkling of an eye, it seemed to Hagg, they turned into the river road, and then they flew up a narrow, lonely lane with stubby blackberry-bushes stretching for miles in all directions. There were no fences on either side, and occasionally shadowy forms of cattle would snort and scramble out of the way as they went by. On the other side was the river, forty feet below, with nothing to prevent a fall if Joker should shy or stumble. Fortunately, the moon was bright now. It was getting low, and would be down by three o'clock, but by that time they would be on a safer road. He glanced at his watch and saw with relief that it was only one-forty-five. With the present pace they ought to make the remaining distance inside of three-quarters of an hour. He had

not counted, though, on the swamp road, which was a little heavy after recent rains, and he did not perceive a very black and ugly thunder-storm that was coming up the river behind him. He had forgotten, too, that such a thing as an accident was possible. They pulled through the swamp at a six-mile gait, and then he let Joker out again. They were going along beautifully, when something black loomed up in the distance ahead. Joker gave a plunge to one side; there was a crash, a shock, and Hagg found himself lying on the roadside with a gash in his head and a disabled arm. He was half stunned for a moment, and then some one picked him up. It was the occupant of the carriage that he had run into.

"Here's a bad job," said the stranger. "Shall I take you home after I have fixed you up? I'm a doctor, you know."

"No time for doctoring," groaned Hagg, between his clinched teeth, for the arm gave him great pain. "Will you help me get on my horse? You have broken my buggy."

"Why, my good man, you can't ride that horse with a broken arm."

"I must."

"Nonsense! Let me tie him to a tree, and I will take you wherever you say."

The doctor took Joker's harness off and laid it in the broken carriage, and, tying the horse to a tree, covered him with a heavy blanket so that there was little danger of his suffering from the cold. Then he carefully helped the sufferer into his goddard and gave him a good swallow out of a bottle in his case.

"Ah!" said the patient, in a tone that indicated that the remedy had struck to the right place.

"Now then?" said the doctor, inquiringly, as he gathered up the reins and adjusted the robes.

"Kickapoo," answered Hagg, huddling into a corner. His arm pained him intensely, but he refrained from asking the doctor to go slower. The brown mare Bessie was a flyer, and got over the ground quite as fast as Joker, though not in such a savage or showy way. The speed was soon broken, however, by the bursting of the great storm that had been gathering all the evening. The doctor leaped down and hurriedly fastened the snug curtains and adjusted the boot, and in another moment a perfect deluge of water came down, accompanied with wind and lightning. Fortunately the storm was from behind, so that the speed was not so greatly hindered as it would otherwise have been.

"Aren't you Dr. Carnegie?" asked Hagg, looking up suddenly and seeing his driver by a flash of lightning.

"Well, yes," I admitted, "that is my name."

"I'm for the *Republican*."

"Aren't you newspaper men pretty enterprising to be out at this time of night, driving over country roads at a break-neck speed?"

"Oh, it's a big thing, doctor; a big thing, I can tell you. I never expect to get anything like it again." And in as few words as possible he told me substantially the history already narrated. I gave Bessie

a little flick with the whip, which made the steady old mare start in a highly astonished manner.

"How much time is there?"

"Plenty," I said, consulting my watch.

And even as I spoke the carriage rumbled into the old-fashioned covered bridge. Only two more miles to the city hall. The roads are streets now, the streets are lighted by electric lights, and Brown Bess pricks up her ears and lengthens her stride.

"This way," Hagg indicated, and I turned off into a smooth, heavily shaded residence-street, and then into a lane of low brick tenements, among which stood the house of Chief Riley. Putting the reins in Hagg's sound hand, I leaped down and pounded vigorously at the door. Door-bells were quite unknown in Emerald Street. The chief came out in shirt and trousers and leaned on the carriage-wheel while Hagg stammered out a little of his story, not being able to talk in a straightforward way on account of his pain and fatigue. The chief looked incredulous as he stood with one foot on the carriage-step, trying to twist his suspenders straight.

Finally the reporter came to the description of the man, tall, lean, thirty-five, with the party-colored hair and the red scar under the right ear.

"The devil!" said the chief. "That means trouble. Let me get my coat." He was back in a minute and climbed into the roomy goddard.

"Are you gents armed?" he asked, and he handed each of us something that glittered in the white light of the arc lamps.

"This way," said the chief, and, following his lead, we soon caught sight of a helmeted figure passing under a light. The chief gave a queer little chirrup, and the man stopped.

"It's you, is it, Hafey?" said the chief, and, jumping down, he gave some brief instructions. "He'll pick up Sullivan and Nesbit," he said, as he climbed in again. "We'll get one more man."

We soon found him, and then we drove by a back way to the old church by the city hall. Riley helped Hagg down, I made my horse secure in the church stables, and then we all stole gently across the grass-plot to the east side of the city hall, which was farthest away from the part of the basement that contained the police offices and cells. The chief softly unlocked an iron door, and we all stole in. It was black as pitch inside, but we managed to make our way through the corridors to a heavy iron-barred door that separated the court-rooms from the cells and the police office. This he also unlocked, and we were at our destination.

"Listen," whispered the chief, and in the breathless silence we could hear a faint, thin, whining noise.

"A saw," he said, "and a deuced well oiled one, too."

We could see into the police office. There sat the guard, Officer McCarthy, tilted back in his arm-chair, with a long black cigar in his mouth and a pink newspaper in his hands. Over his head was a flickering gas-jet that set every motion he made in bold relief. At his left was an open window heavily grated, opening into the little

square. A grating also separated him from the next room or corridor. These cells also had doors of iron grating, opening into the corridor. We could see the cell doors without being seen ourselves, and it was not without a thrill that I saw a white face suddenly gleam at one of them and then vanish in the interior gloom.

"That's him," said the chief, comprehensively.

The sound of cutting, which had ceased for a moment, now recommenced, as though the operator were satisfied that nothing was amiss.

"We have no time to lose," said the chief. "I wish we had one more man. No matter; it's got to go through now. You two stay here and watch those cells. It's no use calling McCarthy; he must be kept quiet for a decoy; but if you see any one outside the window there, blow this whistle. They won't risk that till the last moment. I shan't probably need you for anything except to keep watch."

I tried to prevail on Hagg to sit down, but he refused. He was so excited now that he seemed not to feel the pain of his wound. The chief vanished noiselessly in the gloom, and we stood at our post, afraid and yet anxious for something to happen. Wearily the moments dragged along. The first sign of life that I heard was a low cough, three times repeated, in the cell from which the sawing came. Then there was a grinding sound as of grating iron. Apparently some one was twisting a cut bar out of the way. In a few moments I heard a low whistle outside, and a minute later a sharp command, an oath, a pistol-shot, a faint groan. There was a sudden tumult inside the cells. Officer McCarthy finally aroused himself from his fascinating pink journal, and, snatching club and revolver, rushed into the next room. There was a little scuffle, the dull cracking sound of a club falling on a human skull, and then quiet except for the astonished oaths of the policeman. Outside there were two more shots, followed by flying footsteps, and then the chief panted down the basement steps. "We have bagged two of them," he said, triumphantly, "and the third is a sure thing.—Want help, McCarthy?" McCarthy needed no help, and the chief flew up the steps again. In two minutes he reappeared, leading a battered wreck of a man in hand-cuffs. He conducted his prisoner to a cell and went out again. This time he and another officer reappeared together, carrying the limp and inanimate form of a wounded man.

"He's not so bad as he looks," said the chief, "but it will be a while before he gets around again." He was deposited in the hospital room. When the grated doors had swung shut, a policeman was stationed at each of the cells, and then the chief, with a look of great relief on his face, led the way to his private room.

"How in Tophet did you ever come to know anything about this?" he asked.

Hagg told him as distinctly as he could, but was not able to repeat the whole of the conversation verbatim.

"You say McCarthy took it down?"

"Yes."

"McCarthy!"

"Yes, sorr." And the policeman appeared at the door opening from the main office.

"Have you a message that was sent to this gentleman by telephone this evening? Telephoned in to you, you understand?"

The policeman scratched his head a moment, and then began to grope around in the contents of a big waste-paper basket.

"Here it is, sorr," he said, holding out a crumpled sheet of printing-paper scribbled over with lead-pencil. The chief looked at it intently for a minute.

"What question did you say was asked just before this was repeated?"

Hagg told him.

"I thought so. Listen, will you?

"JOHN CALLAHAN:

"Don't get rattled. Take things cool, and we'll do this job up in good shape. I'll run down and meet you at the North Side about 3.30, and we'll fix this thing up right. Look sharp. DICK."

"Isn't it all right, sorr?" asked McCarthy, anxiously. "Is there anything the matther?"

"Nothing at all, McCarthy. You may go." And the policeman's burly form disappeared.

"Not cut out for a detective," said the chief, grimly, "but he can hold down the Mickies at a dance."

Hagg looked at his watch. It was just three-forty-five.

"I shall have to use your telephone a while, chief."

"Fire away."

I stepped into the hospital room to help the city physician dress the injured prisoner's wounds, and then drove home, after bidding Hagg good-night. I meant to buy a paper and see what he made of his story, but in some way I forgot it, as I have no time for newspaper reading, and I did not hear anything more about the case till I met Hagg on the street a month later, looking unusually prosperous.

"How did you come out?" I asked.

"Great. I dictated a solid column to a short-hander in the office. It was the greatest beat in the history of the paper. The *Democrat* didn't have a line in the morning. The old man paid my doctor's bills, paid for the smashed buggy, and the next week put me on a desk."

"Ah?" I said, inquiringly, not being used to the peculiar language of reporters.

"Yes," he reaffirmed; "I'm assistant city editor now."

The rising young journalist puffed contentedly at his cigar.

"And it was worth it, too," he presently observed, in a philosophical mood. "It isn't every day that the country police have a chance to nab Red Gallagher."

"Oh!" said I, with a real approach to enthusiasm.

For even I had heard of Red Gallagher.

Francis E. Regal.

NEW YEAR'S DAYS IN OLD NEW YORK.

AS a child, in my own parental household, I remember that New Year's Day was held more important than Christmas Day. We children always hung up our stockings on New Year's eve, and, for all I can recollect, believed in a Santa Claus who had not been so exhausted by the fatigues of Christmas that he was unable to pull himself together a week later and descend our particular chimney. Looking back upon this New Year custom of present-giving which prevailed with us, I am inclined to think that its advantages were in one respect noteworthy. Though we had only a few pretty books given us at Christmas, and envied our playmates because of the toys which they then received, still the close of our holiday week, and the dismal outlook of resumed studies, caught a kind of consolatory gilding not to be despised. Perhaps, in my own case, the desire to handle and enjoy my gifts clashed impedingly with the return to task-books. But I was always so poor and listless a student that I am afraid the difference either way would have been with me scarcely apparent.

And so, during my early boyhood, it always happened that New Year's Day was the one most important and festal in the entire calendar. Before the city grew so large that "calling" died into desuetude, its brilliancy, gayety, and bustle were a kind of carnival, intensely vivacious and by no means unpicturesque. Along Fifth Avenue and its adjacent side streets carriages would almost swarm from mid-day till late in the afternoon. Gentlemen thought nothing of paying sixty or eighty visits in the space of nine or ten hours, and sometimes it was almost midnight before their full list was completed. Ladies, and especially the young belles in society, would make playful comparisons with one another, on January second, of the numbers of callers they had received. Sometimes the sharp strain of their haste gave a harlequin attitude to certain "droppers in." Indeed, "poppers" (both in and out) would have been a better name for them, I used to tell myself, while too young for any sharing of their nomadic gallantries. Toward the last, just before the whole idea collapsed utterly, it had taken, beyond doubt, hues of artificiality quite absurd. The pleasantest and most natural visitors, I was wont to remark, were middle-aged gentlemen who looked on the habitude both seriously and healthfully. Their lists did not stretch on to the crack of doom, and they were genuinely glad to cross each threshold on which their footsteps fell, and sure that those who waited beyond would be equally glad of their coming.

I recollect that for years there was one caller whom we children always expected with ridiculous horror, and for whom we would wait, grouped in leaning postures beside the banisters up-stairs or ambuscaded in rear nooks of the further drawing-room. This was the most harmless and gentle of men, but one whom we chose to regard with loathing as a sort of shadowy human reminder that every day was not so joyous as the present. He was our family dentist, and we resented

the thought of his presuming to come and pay us his respects now and here, which he always religiously did nevertheless. Our mother naturally disliked to hear our smothered giggles and cries of disgust, and would always summon us to appear and be smiled upon by good and kind old Dr. Q——. He is dead now, peace be with him, and at this late date I sometimes wonder why he did not punish our New Year's Day impudence and silliness by taking from his coat-tails a sanguinary forceps and flourishing it in our saucy little faces.

We had a maiden aunt, the sister of our mother, who had always dwelt with us, and who had been taught from infancy to regard "New Year Day," as she called it, in a spirit of veneration. With mild tyranny which no one had ever ventured to dispute, she always insisted, weeks beforehand, on making, entirely unassisted, the huge plum-cake that would be placed on the dining-room table. She must perforce do everything herself, even to the stoning of the raisins. In the days of my youth stoned raisins had for me a peculiar fascination, and I am afraid that while watching the concoction of that wonderful plum-cake my fingers, if not so sly as a Spartan boy's, were at least slyer than poor Aunt Mary always observed. When many mysterious ingredients had been made to combine in forming the cake, it was sent to the baker's to be baked. When it returned, a heavy circular solid, richly iced and sometimes with a little white fairy standing on one toe in the midst of its rosettes and arabesques and filigrees, my aunt would guard it as the apple of her eye till the fateful day came round. Even afterward her vigilance would but faintly relax, for it seemed to me that I could never slip into the dining-room and greedily cut a slice from its dark-red, crumbly interior, without hearing either her wailful plaint or staccato reprimand.

My mother loved for years the old-fashioned well-filled table, beside which she would stand, lifting a glass of wine to her lips, though rarely doing more than moisten them, while the "compliments of the season" were beamingly and courteously wished her. It always seemed to me the most amazing thing that none of our guests had any appetite. There I would see cold jellied meats, and silver baskets overflowing with every toothsome device in the way of "fancy cakes," and a great tureen of thrice-cherished pickled oysters, and a golden "pound-cake," iced only less decoratively than the sovereign plum-cake itself; and yet nobody seemed to care for more than a morsel of any of these goodies. My vigilant and critical eye gazed at them from the brain and body of what I fear was a sorry little *gourmand*, and for the life of me I couldn't make out why, with such glorious gastronomic chances, no one less sparingly partook. For myself, in the magnificence of a digestion which as yet had no remorses to live down, I would think nothing of following two or three clandestine pickled oysters with two or three shamelessly purloined macaroons. And yet I must be conscientious about those peptics of urchinhood, lest these of middle age may revenge the too daring vaunt. For I *do* recall certain shadowy hours after bedtime when a draught of peppermint soothed pangs that perhaps were doubly poignant because born of two blended sins, disobedience and gluttony.

When I grew old enough to "make calls" myself, the first experience of this performed social duty is highly painful to recollect. I accompanied my father on a round of visits which luckily did not require a spacious radius for its accomplishment. I wore, on that momentous occasion, a pair of new patent-leather shoes which gave me, at the start, a few ominous pinches. Later, my torments became excruciating, and yet I refused to tell my father, as we walked along together, that I suffered in the faintest degree. But ah, *how* I suffered! I was not yet too old quite to have outgrown the allurements of plum-cake and pickled oysters, but I had no desire for either in the various drawing-rooms which we entered. What to me was pleasure of the palate then, while every joint in every toe was burning and throbbing? Surely the daring depredations of past New Year's days were being punished now. Every stolen pickled oyster, every ravished macaroon, must have been wreaking upon me a separate pang of punishment.

I fear that my first appearance amid the big world of New Year's callers must be set down as the direst of failures. And yet, afterward, as a college youth, and even well beyond the time of graduation, I can look back upon the merriest rambles from street to street, and can recall the blooming faces of winsome maidens who welcomed me at happy stages along my polite pilgrimage. Some of these faces I yet meet, altered by the inflexible flux of many an added New Year's day. Others, alas, have faded and vanished forever. The day itself, too, has become haunted, inevitably, by countless memories, part melancholy and part benign. For as I walk abroad, now, on the first day of the new year, and mark how deserted and apathetic seem the streets, and how the club-windows are crowded with bored and languid young men who might far better be amusing and paying homage to the sweet young ladies of their acquaintance, I can't help ruminating that, after all, I have a great advantage over many mortals much more youthful than myself. My juvenile crimes in regard to the plum-cake and pickled oysters are now comfortably expiated, I trust, by a long repentant interval; and henceforth, in grateful though pensive retrospect, I can gaze back through a vista of departed days, and see glimmering on and on into the mists of infancy certain marble-like mile-stones of recollection. These are the New Year's Days of my past. Those of my present have grown hueless and commonplace. Christmas yet reigns, but her sister holiday is annulled and forgotten. And among the few mourners that survive her I confess myself one of the sincerest.

Edgar Fawcett.

SOCIALIST NOVELS.

BY socialist novels we mean fictions by socialists or their sympathizers, depicting the society of the future from their own stand-point. In them, as a matter of course, the present social order serves only as a foil to throw into distinct view the glowing colors and enticing brilliancy of this ideal scheme. We have not here the picture

of man conquering the lions as in the fable, but the lions painting their own picture in a leonine rage against all that is, to show what might be. The socialist novel thus becomes a work of historical imagination, but historical in the future-perfect tense, as in "Looking Backward," where a bold attempt is made to describe retrospectively the course of social transformation finally effected in the year 2000 of our era. It is the case of Macaulay's New Zealander reversed. Instead of this son of the New World sitting on an arch of London Bridge and meditating on the fallen greatness of England, we have a New England man waking out of a century's sleep in the American Athens and rubbing his eyes in wonder at the mighty social changes brought about during that lapse of time.

This affords an excellent opportunity for interesting comparison and contrast between the old order and the new. The socialist fiction, like so many novels of the period, becomes thus a convenient vehicle for moralizing and philosophizing reflection. As the author of "Mehalah" in this and other of his stories presents us with certain aspects of social pessimism, as George Eliot by her own confession taught through the medium of her novels a kind of scientific social meliorism, and as the unknown or at least unnamed author of "Fraternity" represents a kind of social optimism looking forward to the time when the "fraternal socialist" shall have become fully developed, so the fictions we refer to in this paper are intended to reflect the "scientific socialism" of the day. They serve the purpose of social romances like Sir Thomas More's "Utopia" in the remoter past, or such as Charles Kingsley's "Yeast" and "Alton Locke," Mrs. Gaskell's "Mary Barton," Disraeli's "Sibyl," and similar works by George Sand and Eugène Sue in French, depicting the social yearnings and socialistic tendencies of the last generation. We might add Mrs. Lynn Linton's "Joshua Davidson" as of more recent date.

Our samples shall be taken from different countries, for the purpose of showing to what extent similarities and differences in social and political institutions give a local coloring to these fancy pictures of the society which is to be, as they appear on the dark background of actual social conditions. The most notable examples are Tchernichewsky's "What is to be done?" and Bellamy's "Looking Backward," both stories which have appeared in two young countries with a future before them,—Russia and America,—resembling one another in this particular, that their social institutions were introduced from Western Europe and planted on virgin soil, that in both these countries the gradations peculiar to the old societies are wanting, but with this difference, that in one of these countries political freedom exists in all its plenitude, while in the other the reverse is the case,—a most important difference, affecting the growth of social institutions and the methods of giving effect to aspirations after social improvement. Thus, the title of the Russian novel, "What is to be done?" at once suggests the hopelessly confused state of the Russian mind brought face to face with this modern problem, almost a state of mind bordering on despair, while "Looking Backward" expresses the hopeful outlook into the future as the characteristic trait of the giant

Republic, with its big strides of progress, taking a century by a single step.

Tchernichewsky's is the typical Nihilist novel. But Nihilism, a term invented by Tourgenieff, is only another name for "le socialisme slave." Of Nihilists the late Prince Dolgoroukoff once said there were two kinds, "those who had nothing in their heads and those who had nothing in their pockets." There is a third variety who have both, young men and young maidens of the best Russian families, wealthy, highly educated, and refined, whose hearts yearn with sincere affection for the people, who are willing to sacrifice all for the people, and who have not shrunk from undertaking work in factories and entering menial service to aid thus the people's cause.

The novel before us, more than any other Russian work, has helped in an eminent degree to create this type of Muscovite socialism. Its gifted author, the son of a simple parish priest, distinguished himself as a student of Kieff University and became an early contributor to the celebrated Review the *Contemporary*, conducted by the poet Nekrassoff. He is also known as the translator of the voluminous Universal History of Weber and of Mill's Principles of Political Economy. An Italian critic compares the novel to Swift's Gulliver's Travels in its trenchant sarcasm,—an opinion we cannot share; and in it we have the aspirations of modern Russia clearly expounded. The heroine is Vera Paulowna, a young lady of position converted to materialistic views of life and socialistic opinions by the tutor of the family, Lopoukoff, to whom of course she becomes attached and is married secretly. She begins her new career by opening a cutting-out shop on co-operative principles, taking Owen and Fourier for her teachers, and the business thrives. But her husband has a friend, Kirsanoff, who falls in love with her, and she transfers her affections to the new-comer, which seems to be quite in accordance with the principles of these "new men," and the story turns upon the question, "What is to be done?" Apparently the new code of morality and honor, as understood by the husband, requires a heavy sacrifice on his part to insure the happiness of his wife and friend by renouncing his own rights. This cannot be done legally, so he feigns suicide, and the couple are united. Vera becomes, like most Nihilist young ladies frequenting Swiss universities, a medical student, and eminent in her *métier*. Kirsanoff, who practises in the same profession, saves the life of a certain Katerina Vassilievna. She, too, becomes a new convert and marries a kind of American Russian, Charles Beaumont, who turns out to be the *ci-devant* husband of Vera Lopoukoff, supposed to be dead; henceforth the two households form a fraternal association, and nothing can excel the harmony of their combined family life. This is the general movement of the story, which, it must be confessed, moves awkwardly at times, like most stories of the kind: the *tendenznovelle*, as Germans call it, is more didactic and doctrinal than descriptive and dramatic. Thus, instead of a real picture of the life of a medical man in Russia, we are given to understand how and why the medical profession is chosen to enable its votary to pursue his favorite scientific studies, and one of the most striking of the *dramatis personæ*, Rakmetoff, is intro-

duced mainly for the purpose of showing off the superior ethics of the socialist conspirator. He undergoes all manner of self-inflicted pains and torments to discipline himself by a "natural asceticism" for his important mission. Why this rigor?

"We demand," he explains, "that all men should be in a position to participate in life's enjoyments; and we must prove by our example that we do not ask this for ourselves to satisfy personal desires, but for men in general; that we say this on principle, not in passion; from conviction, not from personal regards."

Without denying to the author the power of realistic representation of human passion and considerable force coming from sincere convictions in drawing the revolutionary ideal, extremely high though somewhat vague; making allowance, too, for the cramping effects of censorship,—the romance was written in prison, like some of Dostoievsky's, the author of the first socialistic novel in Russia,—it must be said that the radical doctrinaire intention throughout spoils its artistic effect. To expatiate on the relation of the sexes, or co-operative modes of industry, or the lofty claims of human solidarity, is well enough even in a novel, if it be judiciously interwoven with the general current of the story to give point and special interest to the dialogue. But here it is the prominent feature, and crowds out subjects of universal human interest, which ought to form the main portion of a work of fiction. In short, it is tedious reading. But, reflecting, as it does, the feelings of the modern Russian socialist, it is or was read by all interested in this movement: one of the few remaining copies of the book, which has become very scarce, was sold for a thousand rubles the other day.

Special interest attaches to the life of the author, the "Russian Lassalle," as one of the martyrs of the cause, he having died after a prolonged exile, soon after his amnesty and return to his native town, Saratow, on the 29th of October, 1889. His work has been called the prologue of Russian liberation in a socialistic print; certainly his novel has an historical bearing "as interpreting to us the first step made in the social and political regeneration of Modern Russia." But for picturesque aspects of Russian socialism and a true picture of the life of the people we must look to such novels as Tourgenieff's "Fathers and Sons," or "Virgin Soil" and "Smoke," and to Gogol's affecting pictures of misery and hopelessness among the masses, as in that remarkable story, "Dead Souls," in which the leading character is a dealer in dead serfs who are still counted as living and attached to this or that piece of land and mortgaged at the bank, a real "traffic in human souls" of the most ghastly nature. No wonder that when its author read the opening chapters of this book to the poet Pushkin the latter cried out, in horror, "God! how wretched life in Russia is!"

Making allowance for minor racial differences, we may fitly compare the socialistic novel of Germany and England, and in so doing note the effect of different forms of government and social classification in two nations of the same stock and stem, yet one of them granting complete liberty of speech and organization, the other using repressive measures and curtailing the right of combination with a view to stem the progress of the socialist movement. "The socialist popular move-

ment in England is only a few years old," remarks the author of "A More Excellent Way," and we find the socialist novel also in its infancy. Judging by the opinions expressed by socialists themselves, this tale expresses fully their views and aspirations. A short analysis will show its drift. We are first introduced into the family life of an Anglo-Indian, whose wife becomes an atheist as the first step towards becoming a convert to socialism. She is sent to Europe to recruit her health and strengthen her faith, but dies a confirmed socialistic atheist in Madeira, imparting her ideas to her son. The latter returns to England, receives his first impressions of the toiling masses on landing at the East India Docks, and is further impressed by the reality of social grievances on witnessing the procession of the unemployed passing the windows of his club. Attending a mass-meeting at Trafalgar Square finishes his complete conversion to socialism:

"Free thought," he said to himself, "appeals to the educated of all ranks, but on the stupid it can make no impression. The outcasts of society, the ignorant, the debased, the criminal, it passes them by. Socialism will save them all."

He develops into an agitator, much to the disgust of the friends of the young lady to whom meantime he has become engaged, and of his uncle's family, who serve as a type of the irreclaimable social conservatives. The heroine is neutral, has more heart than head, and not too much of either. She is the "product of our society as it is; she was gentle, charming, loving, but she was selfish. The faults that individualism produces lay deep down in her character, and made her quite unable for any altruistic endeavor." The interest of the story turns on the difficulties of reconciling the hero's socialistic aspirations with the *convenances* of the circle in which his friends and relations move. It affords the opportunity for introducing dialogue and description, at times humorous, of skirmishes in the drawing-room between the defenders of the old order and the new, the latter, as a matter of course, invariably having the best of the argument. All the while the love-making proceeds on the approved lines, as in ordinary English novels. But it ends fatally, the young lady being unwilling to agree to the proposal of her lover that they should live on three hundred pounds a year, devoting the rest of their income, eight hundred pounds per annum, to the socialist propaganda.

The bulk of this novel is taken up with arguments to show the exceeding evil of that "trinity of evil, rent, profit, and interest." This exposes it to the same criticism which we had to apply to the Russian novel, though perhaps in a less degree, for we have here neither the venomous bitterness against the existing social order peculiar to the Russian story, nor the extravagant expectation entertained of social changes in the future, as in Mr. Bellamy's story, but simply strictures and occasional good-humored hits at narrow prejudices, compromising respectabilities, and commonplace limitations in the social life of the upper middle class, at the worst, severe diatribes directed against the falsities and fatuous imbecilities of ordinary English life, ending with a damnatory sentence such as this: "Yes, our civilization is a sham."

Comparing the stories written by others about socialism, such as

Gissing's "Demos," or Grant Allen's "Philistia," in which Karl Marx is delineated in sufficiently clear outlines, or Simes's "King Capital," or even Mallock's anti-socialist novel, "The Old Order Changeth," we are again bound to state that the presentment of the movement as given by the onlooker is superior both in interest and insight to that of those actually inside it, possibly because calm consideration of social facts and a judicial frame of mind in calculating social and anti-social forces cannot be expected from those who are engaged in the conflict, while a collected manner in dealing with the facts as the foundation of socialist fiction is essential to produce a perfect picture for the general reader.

This power of dispassionate reflection we should *a priori* expect to find in the German socialist novel, self-recollectedness even where the fervor of the social passion is strongest being a characteristic of this nation of thinkers. Moreover, the consciousness of strength which socialists possess in a high degree in the country where as to numbers, intelligence, and perfect organization socialism has advanced all along the line, should lead us to expect that ease and elasticity of mind which enable the writer to attend to literary finish. In order to do this we want a tolerant gentleness in dealing with human infirmities and a tender regard for social prejudices, with the power of seeing the poetic side of even faulty social institutions whilst emphasizing the necessity of social reforms. And this we actually meet with in the socialist novel of Germany, though the German novel as such—barring some exceptions—is inferior to that of other countries.

In "Kranke Herzen,"—"Sick Hearts,"—by Otto Walster, the recognized socialist novelist, we have two novelettes, with clever plots, excellent drawings of natural scenery, and a sentimental interpretation of nature, by one far from unacquainted with the mysteries of natural science. There are also references to psychological phenomena and attempts at physiological treatment of human passion peculiar to the realistic novel of the modern type, especially in the first of these stories.

We have here a real novel, not a fancy picture of the "Land of Liberty," drawn by F. Amersin, in a kind of modern Utopia; still less a wofully dry disquisition, as in "Freiland," by Hertzka, an economist and new convert to socialist views, in an octavo volume of six hundred and seventy-seven pages, containing parliamentary debates on the social question, of heart-rending length and tedious flaccidity. The plot has little to do with socialism, and the socialistic allusions in "Sick Hearts" are introduced unobtrusively and artistically interwoven with the story. What there is of adverse criticism on prevailing social conditions and methods of amendment is introduced with skill and taste, and the tone throughout is conciliatory, the fine lords and ladies of the story being represented in the most favorable light, probably with a view to show what the nobility ought to be, rather than what they are. True, in a former novel of the same author, "Am Webstuhl der Zeit," a social-political romance in three volumes, the tone is less placable and the antagonism against existing social conditions more pronounced. But this only seems to indicate (and we regard it as an augury for good)

that as socialists become more consciously powerful they learn to cultivate moderation and acquire greater catholicity of taste, both in the construction of the socialistic novel and in attention to detail, using it as a means of socialistic propaganda.

In traversing the field of literature of this kind in diverse countries, we find that where socialism is weakest, as in Russia, it assumes the character of the "literature of revolt," because galled into a tone of desperation by official persecution; that where it still haunts the mind of the cultured few, as in the days when Emerson and Hawthorne made Brook Farm a social Utopia, there its hopefulness is very pronounced, extravagant expectations finding their encouragement in the efflorescence of natural progress and prosperity; that where full liberty of speech and action is granted, as in England, the socialist literature in the form of the novel becomes most harmless; that it appears in its best form, as to manner and matter, in the country where socialism has become most perfectly organized, and where this kind of prose poetry fitly expresses the social ideal in a tone of elevation and a freedom from passionate excitement which augurs well for the future of literature should socialism be permitted to celebrate the triumphs it vaunts. From our survey it would appear that the fears entertained by some leading men of culture in Germany, in view of this threatened invasion of "the modern Huns and Vandals" in making havoc of all literature, are rather exaggerated and unreasonable.

In France alone, where socialism, like society, has become most prosaic, no novels of this kind—except perhaps "Jacques Vingtras" by Jules Vallès—have been produced of late years. In the "Cri du Peuple," a daily paper much read by socialists and at one time rendered popular by the novels of Vallès (which, however, were not socialistic novels), M. Zola and his school furnish the *feuilleton;* and realistic novels are largely advertised by the principal socialist bookseller of Paris as presumably the most acceptable pabulum of the socialist novel-readers of France. From which it would appear that as the centre of gravity of socialism, as an intellectual ideal, has moved from France to Germany, so the absence of the socialist novel in France marks the decadence of socialism itself, and indicates a descent from a higher and more spiritual to a lower and more material conception of its claims. It represents the most recent form of French socialism, with its lack-lustre practicalities, commonplace aims, and bold demands for increased opportunities of self-indulgence.

Thus it would seem that the extinction of the socialist novel implies a degradation of socialism itself, and that its further development in artistic perfection will depend on the higher mental and moral elevation of socialism regarded in the light of a social aspiration, a principle which it is well to bear in mind at a time when the novel occupies so important a place in literature.

M. Kaufmann.

Books of the Month.

Chambers's Concise Gazetteer of the World.

The first impulse upon handling a book of reference is to dip into its pages and test its quality. The recent wars in the East afford unusual illustrations, and when, for instance, one looks into this *Concise Gazetteer*, just from the Lippincott press, for Port Arthur, he is furnished with the compact information which follows, and is satisfied: "A Chinese naval station and arsenal on the southern extremity of the rocky peninsula which stretches southward between the Gulf of Pecheli and the Corean bay of the Yellow Sea." The harbor is described, and we are told that there is a light-house and electric light; while the population is 4000.

So of every other point touched by the present war; of the Mosquito Coast, Bluefields, and of any quarter of the globe which suddenly rises into notice from disaster, political change, or human associations. The volume is a well-condensed and handy octavo of over seven hundred pages, and will be an indispensable adjunct to every reference library, every office, and every intelligent household that endeavors to know the history and to keep abreast of the news of the world.

Liber Amoris; or, The New Pygmalion. By William Hazlitt. With Additional Matter from Original Manuscripts. Privately Printed.

Not in the annals of English literature is there a case parallel to this of the profound critic and man of taste Hazlitt and the "lodging-house decoy" Sarah Walker. Even Shelley and Burns, culpable as their conduct was, expended the intensified passion of the poet upon objects which fitly inspired it. But Hazlitt, a man of extreme sensibility, who dealt, as he boasted, in abstract truths; who wrote volumes of elevated essays which have become a treasure of English literature, and which now take the highest place among the achievements of his day in prose,—Hazlitt, the thinker who counsels us to live to ourselves, wastes his intellect and heart upon a creature beneath him in every sense, who was not even pretty, for "her eyes were the worst and had the worst expression he had ever seen of hypocrisy and design, and had a shiny watery look, yet she was well made and had handsome arms." It is thus that he raves about her through the entire book, now consumed with unconquerable love, now in the throes of a bitter hatred which vents itself in execrations.

While those who like such a resurrection of household skeletons will here find ample matter to their taste, it is probable that with readers of Hazlitt who had forgotten or never fully known of the circumstances his reputation will severely and justly suffer. He is shown in an entirely new light, for not until the present "privately printed" volume of three hundred and fifty or more pages appeared had there ever been a collation of the original manuscript of the *Liber Amoris* with the edition of 1823, and here both versions are given intact, together with some hitherto unpublished letters of Hazlitt and of his wife bearing upon the deplorable episode.

We are also treated to a reprint of Sarah Hazlitt's *Journal of my Trip to Scotland*, written when she travelled there to aid in securing the divorce, and to a fac-simile reprint of the original title-page of the *Liber Amoris*.

The present edition of the Lippincotts is the definitive one, as it is inconceivable that anything further could be said than is furnished in Mr. Le Gallienne's Introduction and the preface entitled Hazlitt from Another Point of View. The frontispiece is a faithful fac-simile of Bewick's excellent portrait of Hazlitt.

The Source and Mode of Solar Energy throughout the Universe. By I. W. Heysinger, M.A., M.D.

A singularly stimulating book is this treatise of over three hundred pages, which expounds a novel and often profound theory of the heavenly bodies, and especially of solar energy. These vast subjects have long been at once the hope and the despair of astronomers; and the greatest of scientific minds, Laplace, Helmholtz, Siemens, and scores of lesser men, have endeavored, without success, to explain what has hitherto transcended the human understanding.

Dr. Heysinger has brought to the subject a wide and discriminating knowledge, which, with the aid of his own surprising speculations, has enabled him to discover a possible clue to the hidden processes of the sun and stars, and even to the obscure passages of the Bible which deal with kindred facts known to the Hebrews. His theory is an entirely original one, and possesses many claims to credence. It will be examined by scholars with attention, and will appeal to laymen as involving much information, very useful and elevating, with a plausible explanation of what has hitherto remained beyond their ken.

The book is entitled *The Source and Mode of Solar Energy throughout the Universe*, and is published by the J. B. Lippincott Company in a handsome style befitting its contents. Briefly stated in the author's words, its purpose is "to establish the perpetual maintenance and continual regulation and uniformity of the solar emission of light and heat for all time to come, and the great and harmonious correlation of all the bodies of space into each other." Dr. Heysinger is a fluent writer, and commands an extensive knowledge of books upon his special topic. From these he draws supporting evidence with much skill and force. His style is often eloquent, and his book, though upon a subject over-profound for the general reader, will be relished even by those unacquainted with astronomy.

Heraldry in America. By Eugene Zieber.

A desideratum in this day of social forms and social ambitions is a good book on heraldry. We have the wealth, the culture, and the character which entitle us to rank with the best of Norman blood, and in many cases these qualities are the outgrowth of lineal descent from that fine old stock. We should, therefore, know more about the quarterings to which we are entitled by hereditary right, and Mr. Eugene Zieber has done a commendable work in preparing his volume, *Heraldry in America*, just from the Lippincott press, which makes our title clear and affords every requisite for a thorough knowledge of the subject.

The text is entirely new, and the book, in mechanical excellence, is worthy of its subject. It is printed with especial care on heavy super-calendered paper, and holds between its covers more than nine hundred and fifty illustrations, without which a book on heraldry would be deprived of its chiefest claim to attention. Besides these, there are colored lithograph plates, steel plates, and others which give distinction to the volume. The insignia of Colonial and Revolutionary societies, whose revival is now so much the vogue, are allotted

ample space, and book-plates, a current passion, are by no means neglected. A glossary of French and English terms is also included, thus equipping the student or amateur in all completeness.

In the Garden, and Other Poems. By Emily Elizabeth Veeder.

The poets who have hailed from the West have not hitherto won a large renown for those sentiments which belong to poetry pure and simple. The singers of repute have mainly produced poems of dialect and homely feeling. It is, therefore, pleasant to welcome a new candidate for the laurels whose ideals are of the tender, elevated, and fanciful order, and who knows and loves nature for its own sake.

Mrs. E. E. Veeder has sent forth through the Lippincotts a book of modest size, entitled *In The Garden*, the verses of which have the delicate charm which characterizes true poetry. Some of her purely out-door work, as in the title-poem, is genuinely sweet, of which the following bears witness:

O Nature, turn from blossoming,
From joyous energies of spring,
And see the famine of my life.
By grace divine,
Am I not thine?

But Mrs. Veeder possesses also a narrative gift, and can condense into a single stanza the fervor of a strong human passion. Her tale, Entranced, will testify to this, and her Austin's Painting of Christ will show the deep devotional quality in her nature.

As a whole, the book is full of a great promise and does full credit to the pen which wrote *Her Brother Donnard*.

The Despotic Lady. By W. E. Norris.

Clever as a comedy by Mr. Daly's players is this delightful little story by W. E. Norris,—the latest work of an always notable tale-teller. *The Despotic Lady* is a tale of social diplomacy practised upon Lady Maunsell, a grim and underbred autocrat who patronizes religion and has a pretty, demure daughter who secretly holds more worldly views. A sentimental poet, Eric Langdale, suffers contumely and vituperation from Lady Maunsell because of his love for Bertha, and, to his great joy, he finds this love returned. The noble lady desires to marry Bertha to Eric's friend, Peter Garnett, who will one day be Lord Hexham, and so does Lady Hexham; but General Langdale appears on the scene and upsets all calculations. He wilfully affronts Lady Maunsell, and piques her to desire an alliance with his family. Then, discovering that she has had an early history likely to be worth concealing, he practises a sharp manœuvre which leads up to the dénouement. An evening's reading lies between these attractive covers such as can rarely be found among ephemeral books, and the Messrs. Lippincott have acted advisedly in adding this to their list of novels.

The Spell of Ursula. By Effie Adelaide Rowlands.

Miss Rowlands has won instantaneous favor with her American readers, and her first book, *My Pretty Jane*, has multiplied its editions to meet the demand which its charming narrative created. Upon the heels of this success comes forth another novel, *The Spell of Ursula*, which will confirm the high opinion formed, and justly formed, of the first book. In this new tale there is

a mystic element which adds a touch of romance to the high-bred life of the English men and women who pace through the pages. Ursula Grant is no antic witch with flying locks and palsied hands, but a young and lovely girl born in the Orient and early transplanted to England. Deeply in love with her is Rupert Featherstone, who has been her playmate and slave from boyhood up. The foils to these are Lord Chestermere and Catherine Forbes, betrothed in infancy but now truly in love. How the spell of Ursula works its sorceries to the undoing of all these hopes, and how the charm follows out its destiny, is left for the interested reader to discover. But entertainment, the introduction to types of English aristocratic life, and, better still, the acquaintance with a writer who has an indefinable charm and distinction, are all to be met with in *The Spell of Ursula*, which the Lippincotts have just added to their *Series of Select Novels*.

Barabbas. A Dream of the World's Tragedy. By Marie Corelli.

At this holy-tide of the year a book like *Barabbas*, by Marie Corelli, possesses a peculiar fitness. It is the story of the Crucifixion done by a reverent and skilful hand into a tale which holds the reader in a trance of attention through all the three hundred pages. The characters and country of the Bible story are rendered tellingly real by Miss Corelli's methods, which are inspired by an artistic purpose and signalized by great narrative gifts. This remarkable book, published by the Lippincotts, is now selling in its fifteenth thousand, and has taken a permanent place among historical romances.

THE Royal Baking Powder is the purest and strongest baking powder made. It has received the highest award at the U. S. Gov't official investigation, and at all the Great International Expositions and World's Fairs wherever exhibited in competition with others.

It makes the finest, lightest, sweetest, most wholesome bread, cake, and pastry. More economical than any other leavening agent.

ROYAL BAKING POWDER CO., 106 WALL ST., NEW-YORK.

Old Marriage Notices.—Married—In England, Mr. Matthew Rousby, aged 21, to Mrs. Ann Taylor, aged 89. The lady's grandson was at this unequal union, and was five years older than his grandfather. (Salem Mercury, October 21, 1788.)

The 16th inst., Mr. William Checkley, son of Rev. Mr. Samuel Checkley of Boston, was married to Miss Polly Cranston, a young lady of genteel Acquirements and of a most Amiable Disposition. (Old Boston Paper, December 19, 1766.)

Thursday last, was married, at Newport, R.I., John Coffin Jones, Esq., of Boston, merchant, to the truly amiable and accomplished Miss Abigail Grant, daughter of the late Alexander Grant, Esq., a lady of real merit, and highly qualified to render the connubial state supremely happy. (Old Boston Paper, May 22, 1786.)

In Williamsburg, N.C., Major Smith, of Prince Edwards, Va., to Miss Charlotte B. Brodie. This match, consummated only a few days since, was agreed upon 31 years ago at Camden, S.C., when he was captured at the battle of Camden, and being separated by the war, &c., each had supposed the other dead until a few months since, when they accidentally met, and neither plead any statute of limitation in bar of the old bargain. (Salem Gazette, July 19, 1811.)

Married—In this town, on Sunday evening last, by Rev. Dr. Haven, Mark Simes, Esq., Deputy Postmaster, &c., to the Elegantly Pretty and Amiably Delicate Miss Mary Ann Blount, youngest daughter of the late Captain John Blount of Little Harbour.

Genius of Hymen, power of fondest love,
In showers of bliss descend from worlds above
On Beauty's rose and Virtue's manlier form,
And shield, ah, shield them both from Time's tempestuous storm!

(Oracle of the Day, Portsmouth, N.H., November 24, 1798.)

At Concord, Ebenezer Woodward, A.B., Citizen Bachelor of Hanover, N.H., to the Amiable Miss Robinson. At Longmeadow, Mr. John M. Dunham, Citizen Bachelor and Printer, as aforesaid, to the Amiable Miss Emily Burt. The promptness and decision which the said citizens have shown

In all the fond intrigues of love

are highly worthy of imitation, and the success that has so richly crowned their courage and enterprise must be an invincible inducement to the fading phalanx of our remaining bachelors to make a vigorous attack on some fortress of female beauty with a determined resolution

Ne'er to quit the glorious strife

till, drest in all her charms, some blooming fair Herself shall yield, the prize of conquering love. (Boston, 1795.)—*Current Literature.*

Just Exactly.—He was perhaps the most phlegmatic and cautious servant in the world.

"If I should send you to the cigar-store for a box of cigars," his master said to him one day, "how long will it take you to return?"

"Well," was the reply, after a long pause, "as near as I can judge, about the same time that it will take me to go there."—*New York Herald.*



H. I. M., EMPRESS OF RUSSIA.

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HOLDING UP A STAGE.—"A stage with six passengers in it held up by one man, and the paper says they were a pack of cowards," said the man in the seat ahead as he turned himself round.

"Well, let me tell you, there's another side to it. I've been right on deck on several occasions when a hold-up didn't work worth a cent. The papers never seem to get hold of the other side, though."

"Let's go and have a cigar and talk about road agents. If you have been held up, give us the particulars."

"Yes, I've been held up," he said, as we got seated in the smoker. "My first experience was about twelve miles from Tuscarora, Nevada. There were seven men in the coach, and every one of us had shooting-irons and sand enough to use them. We were stopped just where we didn't expect it, and that was the trouble.

"Before we knew what was up, a fellow had us covered with two revolvers. It wasn't his guns that made us take water, so much as his general demeanor. You had only to glance at him to realize that he was a devil and held human life as cheap as dirt. He could not keep all of us covered, but we had no show at him. If one of us had fired and missed, he'd have downed the whole crowd before he stopped shooting. I believe that any one of us if alone in the stage would have pulled down on him, but, as it was, each one feared to draw his vengeance on the rest. He took watches, rings, and money to the value of five thousand dollars from our crowd. He had us stuck up for half an hour, and there wasn't a second in that time he didn't have his eye on every man and hold himself ready for a shot. That chap stopped over a dozen stages before he got his dose."

"And you spoke of several failures."

"Yes, I have witnessed several. Of all the road agents in the West for the last twenty years not more than five or six had any business to take to that line. The others were chumps and failures. Why, I've been from Cheyenne north when we'd pass three or four dead bodies in a day,—corpses of chumps who'd tried to make a hold-up and got left. One day, about ten miles south of the Platte, when there were five of us in the stage, a fellow jumped out and yelled his yell. Every man in the stage knew he was a galoot by his antics and the trembling of his voice, and we weren't a bit surprised when the driver out with his gun and dropped him without checking the gait of his horses."—*Detroit Free Press.*

MAN *vs.* RAT.—The town of Wolverhampton enjoys the distinction of having invented a new sport, which, as long as the novelty lasts, is likely to be popular among the colliers in "the black country." At a tavern in the outskirts of that town a man was matched against a rat tied to a wooden peg in the middle of a table by a long line, which gave it plenty of play. The rat tried to escape, but was forced to fight, and the man, whose hands were tied behind his back, attacked it with his teeth. According to the local chroniclers, the engagement was a savage one, and the rat inflicted severe bites upon his human antagonist, but the vermin was ultimately killed, fairly and squarely. The *Telegraph* years ago obtained notoriety by a vivid circumstantial account of a fight between a man and a dog in this same black country, but the story was denounced as an invention, and it was never properly confirmed. But this man-rat contest is apparently all right.—*London Correspondent.*



Rest comes often

to users of

SAPOLIO.

It drives dirt forth and lets light and brightness into the house

A THRIFTY PEOPLE.—Richard Tangye, the great engineer, in his autobiography gives some curious examples of the economy of the Cornish miners. Compared with these thrifty folk, Scotch peasants and New England farmers are extravagant. His grandfather was a miner, and when once asked what his daily work was he replied,—

"Ten hours at the engine and eight at digging. The rest of the day I have to waste."

Tangye states that he once saw this same old man fall into a fury of rage because a boy whom he had hired threw away a match after lighting a candle with it.

"D'ye waste my property, ye loon? Then ye will never be worth saxpence of yer own!" he shrieked.

A careful old woman lamented a stolen pie for more than forty years. The tears would come to her eyes whenever she talked about the lost dainty.—*London Million.*

A MAN OF TONGUES.—Dr. G. W. Leitner, of Woking, editor of *The Oriental Review*, is surely one of the most "polyglot" of men. Of him it might be said, as of Goldsmith's parson,—

> And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
> That one small head could carry all he knew.

Here is a list which we have compiled from *Languages* of the languages or dialects in or concerning which the doctor has written works:

Arabic, Basque, Breton, Burishki or Khajuna, Dard languages, English, French, Gaelic, German, Greek, Hungarian, Hebrew, Irish, Icelandic, Italian, Kaffiri, Kashmiri, Latin, Magadhi, Pali, Portuguese, Persian, Romaic, Spanish, Sindhi, Sharada, Turkish, Urdu, Wakhi, Welsh, Zingari.

In addition to these Dr. Leitner has a knowledge of Sanskrit, Dutch, Russian, Hindi, Punjabi, Pushtu, and various dialects of Turki and Tibetan. Is there a language or dialect on the face of the earth that the doctor doesn't know?—*Westminster Gazette.*

THE DISCOVERY OF COFFEE.—Towards the middle of the fifteenth century a poor Arab was travelling in Abyssinia. Finding himself weak and weary, he stopped near a grove. Being in want of fuel to cook his rice, he cut down a tree, which happened to be covered with dried berries. His meal being cooked and eaten, the traveller discovered that these half-burned berries were fragrant. He collected a number, and on crushing them with a stone he found the aroma increased to a great extent.

While wondering at this, he accidentally let the substance fall into a can which contained his scanty supply of water. Lo, what a miracle! The almost putrid liquid was partially purified. He raised it to his lips. It was fresh and agreeable, and after a short rest the traveller so far recovered his strength and energy as to be able to resume his journey.

The lucky Arab gathered as many berries as he could, and, having arrived at Aden in Arabia, he informed the mufti of his discovery. That worthy was an inveterate opium-smoker, who had been suffering for years from the influence of the poisonous drug. He tried an infusion of the roasted berries, and was so delighted at the recovery of his former vigor that in gratitude to the tree he called it *camuha*, which in Arabic signifies "force."—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

A Page for Housekeepers

Fruit Pinwheels

The following is *Miss Maria Parloa's* receipt for Fruit Pinwheels, which, she writes, are "nice for luncheon or tea:"

"Mix together and rub through a sieve one pint of flour, one tablespoonful of sugar, half a teaspoonful of salt and two teaspoonfuls of Cleveland's baking powder. Into this mixture rub two generous tablespoonfuls of butter. Wet with a scant half pint of milk. Sprinkle the board with flour, and, putting the dough upon it, roll down to a large square about half an inch thick. Spread a heaping tablespoonful of soft butter on this and then spread with a cupful of sugar and a cupful of currants. Grate a little nutmeg over all, and roll up like a jelly roll—or pinwheel style. Cut in slices about three-quarters of an inch thick and lay in well buttered pans. Do not let the slices touch each other. Bake in a very quick oven for about twelve minutes."—(*Copyright by Cleveland Baking Powder Co.*)

Cheese Fingers

(*By Miss Cornelia C. Bedford.*) One cup of flour, two tablespoonfuls Parmesan cheese (or four tablespoonfuls ordinary grated cheese) one tablespoonful of butter, one quarter teaspoonful Cleveland's baking powder, pinch of salt and a dash of cayenne, or one quarter of a teaspoonful paprika.

Rub the butter into the flour, add the salt, cayenne and cheese, mix with cold water to a soft dough, roll out one half inch thick, cut in one-half inch strips, lay in a greased pan, and bake in a moderate oven until golden brown.

For Lunch Parties

(*Miss Parloa.*) "For one dozen muffins use one pint of flour, a generous half pint of milk, two teaspoonfuls of Cleveland's baking powder, half a teaspoonful of salt, two tablespoonfuls of sugar, three tablespoonfuls of butter and two eggs. Mix the dry ingredients together and rub through a sieve. Melt the butter. Beat the eggs till light and add the milk to them. Add this mixture to the dry ingredients; then stir in the melted butter. Beat the batter vigorously for a few seconds and then put in buttered muffin pans and bake for about twenty minutes in a quick oven."—(*Copyright by Cleveland Baking Powder Co.*)

"az iz" Buckwheat Cakes

Two teacupfuls buckwheat flour, one teacupful wheat flour, three teaspoonfuls Cleveland's Superior baking powder, one teaspoonful salt. Mix all together, and add sufficient sweet milk or water to make a soft batter. Bake on griddle at once, and serve them piping hot.

For Breakfast

Receipts for 41 different kinds of breakfast breads and cakes, muffins, waffles, griddle cakes, scones, sally lunn, rolls, gems, etc. are given in our cook book, a copy of which will be mailed free on receipt of stamp and address.

CLEVELAND BAKING POWDER CO.,
81 Fulton Street, New York.

For light and wholesome cookery Cleveland's baking powder has no equal.



An old lady of Massachusetts was famed in her native township for health and thrift. To an acquaintance who was once congratulating her upon the former, she said,—

"We be pretty well for old folks, Josiah and me. Josiah hasn't had an ailin' time for fifty years, 'cept last winter. And I 'ain't never suffered but one day in my life, and that was when I took some of the medicine Josiah had left over, so's how it shouldn't be wasted."

"M. Paul Bourget," says *The Pall Mall*, "is one of the youngest men who have ever been welcomed under the dome of the French Institute, but he is a couple of years older than was Pierre Loti when he attained the same honor. Though not yet forty-two, he looks somewhat older, his nervous temperament having told upon his health and given his features a pinched and weary aspect. His profile is clearly cut and keen, and he wears only a moustache, which is curled up almost in military fashion. Unless animated by conversation, his blue eyes give an impression of fatigue, not to say dulness. There is nothing imposing in his stature or bearing. One would not, in short, recognize him at the first glance as a man of genius. Spoilt and *blasé* by the great ladies of fashionable society, he is apt to give himself airs, not of the bumptious and offensive sort familiar enough in many literary lions, but tinged with a querulous and almost peevish conceit. However, he has got married lately to a very charming woman, Mlle. Minnie David, and domestic life is said to have improved him. He occupies part of a gloomy and quiet house in the Rue Monsieur."

A Very Delicate Scale.—Wonderful stories have been told concerning the extreme delicacy of the scales used by the mints at Philadelphia and London. That at the first-named place is said to tell the exact weight of a hair. The London wonder shows a difference in the weight of a card after a name has been written on it. The most accurate scale in the world is now being discussed in England. It is so finely balanced that it shows the weight of a candle or taper to be less after the flame has been extinguished.—*Detroit Free Press.*

Round Robins Out of Date.—"In the old days, when dissatisfaction arose among the working-classes," said an old-time manufacturer, "the leaders of movements sought to hide themselves rather than be heralded as being at the head. I remember when a petition came in to me from my men it was impossible to tell who was the most active or master man upon the list. They adopted the idea which originated at sea when the crew wished to protest against anything the captain did. In those early days, if any one had been caught stirring up dissatisfaction among the men of a vessel, no time would have been lost in stringing him up to the yard-arm. So the sailors, to make it impossible for the officer to know who was the first man to start the list, invented the 'round robin.' The grievance was written in a circle, around which the names were signed, going out like the spokes of a wheel. In such a document one name was just as prominent as another, so the captain would have to forego any punishment. Well, that's the way my men did. Their petitions were always 'round robins.' I never knew who were the leaders and who were the followers. But now 'round robins' are out of date, and committees have taken their place. There is now no attempt to conceal the names of leaders. In fact, there is scarcely a manufacturing establishment in the country that has not its recognized labor leader."—*Pittsburg Dispatch.*

For Babies and Children

All children need the elements of food found in Cod-liver Oil and Hypophosphites of Lime and Soda. Many are able to derive these properties from their ordinary food. *But many do not;* consequently they do not thrive. Their teeth are defective. Their bones are not properly formed. Their blood is depleted, cheeks lack color, and vitality is at a low ebb. Their brain takes all their nourishment and nothing is left for the ground-work of their future health.

Scott's Emulsion

of Cod-liver Oil and Hypophosphites, is an easy and concentrated form of the food properties that are *absolutely necessary* to all growing children. It overcomes wasting tendencies, enriches and purifies the blood, makes healthy flesh, and brings rosy cheeks and bright eyes to all the babies and children who take it. It is nourishment to the bones as well as to the vital organs and muscular system.

"Christian Intelligencer."

MESSRS. SCOTT & BOWNE, NEW-YORK, Nov. 5, 1894.

GENTLEMEN—A sense of gratitude for the benefit received from the use of Scott's Emulsion of Cod-liver Oil, in the case of my young son, prompts me to write you that others may profit by my experience. For some months the little fellow, who had never been a rugged child, seemed to steadily waste away. He lost all desire for play, became weak and nervous, had little appetite, much trouble in obtaining sleep, and was very susceptible to the slightest changes in the weather. I was advised he was growing too fast and a tonic prescribed, but he continued to lose in weight. One day a friend said: "What that child needs is *more nourishment*, and the thing to give him is Scott's Emulsion of Cod-liver Oil. It would make a new boy of him in a month." He spoke so earnestly I decided to follow his advice, and the effect was almost magical. An improved appetite was at once noted, the roses gradually returned to his cheeks, he experienced no trouble from sleeplessness, a spirit of fun and desire for play developed, he gained rapidly in weight, and in about a month verified my friend's confident prediction, for he was indeed a new boy. To-day he is apparently as strong and healthy as a child could be, and the wonderful change was wrought by Scott's Emulsion of Cod-liver Oil and Hypophosphites.

Respectfully yours, R. F. BOGARDUS.



Trade-Mark.

SCOTT & BOWNE, New-York City. All Druggists. 50c. and $1.

POWDERED CARBONS.—Dropping into a drug-store, I saw a man throw down a lot of half-burnt carbons of arc lights, get his money, and walk out.

In reply to a question about the transaction, the head of the concern said, "Some people say the inhalation of carbon is good for consumption. I don't know whether it is or not. I have heard that there is no consumption in factories where there is a strong odor of carbon. I do not know who started the notion. But people come in and tell us about what they hear, and we get what they ask about to accommodate them. We pestleize these carbon points and sell the powder in whatever quantity is desired, and the purchasers inhale the powder in the belief that it is beneficial. If I was to tell them that it wasn't, they would get it somewhere else, and I would lose all their trade."—*Chicago Herald.*

PARSEES.—The entire costume of the Parsee symbolizes the mysteries of religion. The gauze shirt, bound with the sacred cord of Kusti, must be woven with seventy-two threads to represent the chapters of the "Izashni," and the twelve knots of the heavy tassel signify the twelve months of the year and represent the perpetual obligation of sacred duties. The embroidery of the sloping black hats carries out a further doctrinal signification, and in the white head-bands of the women warp and woof form an elaborate cryptograph of Zoroastrian theology. Even the mode of wearing the silken saris of pink, primrose, azure, and green is prescribed by ritual law, though the linen head-band gets pushed farther back, and the floating folds of the brilliant veil occasionally combine coquetry with orthodoxy. A solitary instance recurs to memory of a fuzzy fringe framed by head-band and sari and contrasting strangely with the Asiatic face and beautiful historic dress of the wearer; but the Parsee beauty rarely ventures on such a decided protest against the tyranny of custom and creed. The possession of unlimited wealth enables the Parsees of Bombay to exercise important control over the fortunes of the city, and rows of splendid mansions in the suburbs of Parel show the status of the colony which identifies itself with Western progress while retaining its original character and ancient faith.—*All the Year Round.*

DISLIKES OF AUTHORS.—It is a curious thing how those who write famous books or create well-known *noms de plume* develop an aversion to them as time goes on. Edward Bellamy, for example, absolutely shudders when one talks of "Looking Backward" in his presence. There is no surer way to offend Bret Harte than to refer to him as the author of "The Heathen Chinee." Will Carleton cannot imagine why people should associate "Over the Hills to the Poor-House" so prominently with his name. Mrs. Burnett dislikes too much mention of "Little Lord Fauntleroy" in her presence, but courts any praise of her story of "Vagabondia," of which so few, in comparison with those who know her famous juvenile story, have any knowledge. Charles Heber Clark has a strong aversion to any association of his once famous *nom de plume* of "Max Adeler" with his name. Charles G. Leland's ire is aroused when one speaks of "Hans Breitmann" as his best piece of work. E. P. Roe never could understand why people bought "The Opening of a Chestnut Burr" in preference to his later and what he deemed his better books. Eugene Field feels that he has written fifty poems that are superior to "Little Boy Blue." John Hay's feelings are hurt when one introduces him at a dinner, as did a chairman at a literary supper recently, as the author of "Little Breeches."—*London Tit-Bits.*


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Cottolene is clean, delicate, wholesome, appetizing and economical. It is so good that it is taking the place of all other shortenings. Be sure and get the genuine
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CHICAGO

DIDN'T MIND CONVERTS.—There is one delightful anecdote touching the King of Ava's reply to the request of an American missionary for leave to try to make converts among the king's subjects. The king told Dr. Price that he granted his request, and that he might preach his religion, but whenever his subjects were converted by it he should cut off their heads and send them at once into the paradise of which the doctor had told them.—*Athenæum.*

BESANT LECTURES TOLSTOI.—Count Tolstoi lets any one who pleases publish his novels. He will not take any money for them. Very good indeed. And why not? He gives them to any publisher who pleases to produce them. Why not? If I were in a position to refuse the rents, or the proceeds, or the profits, of my own property, I should, however, choose the people who should enjoy them. Supposing Count Tolstoi to give away two thousand pounds a year by this high-minded conduct, this large income goes to enrich private persons who have done nothing whatever to earn the money. Now, a good deal might be done with two thousand pounds a year. It would erect almshouses for four or five persons. In ten years forty or fifty old people could be maintained forever, or a scholarship could be founded each year which might enable a poor lad to climb the tree and become lord chancellor or Archbishop of Canterbury. There are many other ways in which two thousand pounds a year could be spent, all useful to the world. To throw it out into the open field and to call on the world to scramble for it does not seem to me a wise or a useful purpose for that money.—WALTER BESANT, in *London Queen.*

INCUBATED BABIES.—The incubator in the babies' ward of the Postgraduate Hospital is a great improvement on that at the Maternity Hospital, although it lacks the sentimental surroundings of the one in charge of the young woman doctors. In this improved affair the patient will not have to be once lifted from his snug nest from the time he is placed inside until he becomes strong enough to be removed with safety.

The incubator is set upon bicycle wheels, so that it may be moved about whenever desired. The fresh air is heated by passing between two strata of hot water, rises up both at the head and the foot of the mattress, and is kept in motion by an aluminum fan run by clock-work, thus preventing any possibility of the little patient's suffering for want of air. There is also a tube for the supply of oxygen, liberal quantities of which are good for babies who are hanging on to life by the merest thread, and it is believed this improvement will save a great many lives that would have been lost in the old incubator.

By means of a clever mechanical device, the weight of the baby is always registered, so that the physician may discover the slightest variation at any time. Infants are subject to tubercular diseases, which develop before the doctor knows what is the matter. Of course the incubator must be opened in order to feed the baby its artificial food, but by means of a deft sliding of the covers the entrance of any cold air from the outside is prevented. The temperature of the inside of the incubator is kept as near 98° F. as possible.—*New York World.*

KING HUMBERT is a royal sportsman of unusual skill with the rifle. He went out from his hunting-lodge at Valle dell' Orco one day recently and killed eighteen wild goats and thirty-two chamois. When the "bag" was examined it was found that every one of the victims of the royal rifle had been shot in the head.—*New York World.*

Two and two make four in approved arithmetic and in legitimate business. The value of a dollar in life insurance is upon the average never had for less than a dollar. Smith and Jones die early, and their families are benefited many times beyond their dollars contributed to the general fund, and, of course, at the cost of the living, who supply the deficit in equitable proportion to their chance of dying and the sum insured to each.

There is no escape from the law of average, but there are plans and methods of insurance better adapted to meet individual needs than others; better in the time and amount of payments to the company; better in the guarantees given the assured; better in the freedom from unnecessary restrictions; better in the combination of investment and protection.

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FOR THE CURE OF

MALARIA,

INDIGESTION,

FEVER and AGUE,

POORNESS OF THE BLOOD,

NEURALGIA,

LOSS OF APPETITE,

WASTING DISEASES,

and GENERAL DEBILITY.



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LOUIS NAPOLEON AT PLAY.—At the Tuileries, Madame received me in a salon hung with tapestry. Through a half-open door I heard a child's voice; it was that of the Prince Imperial, who was playing in the next room. Soon we heard the noise of a saw and a hammer, and, as I listened, Mme. Bizot led me quietly to the door of that room. "Look," she said, speaking low and opening the door a little wider. Then I saw the Emperor seated on the carpet and making toys for his son.—MME. OCTAVE FEUILLET: *Some Years of My Life.*

PAINTED ARAB GIRLS.—Shief is a very picturesque spot, perched on a rock, with towers and turrets constructed of sun-dried brick; only here, as elsewhere in these valleys, the houses are so exactly the same color as the rock behind them that they lose their effect. The rich have evidently recognized this difficulty, and whitewash their houses, but in the poorer villages there is no whitewash, and consequently nothing to make them stand out from their surroundings. Arab girls, before they enter the harem and take the veil, are a curious sight to behold. Their bodies and faces are dyed a bright yellow with turmeric; on this ground they paint black lines, with antimony, over their eyes; the fashionable color for the nose is red; green spots adorn the cheek, and the general aspect is grotesque beyond description.

My wife tells me that the belles in the Sultan's harem are painted in this fashion, and that they also paint gloves on their hands and shoes on their feet, and, thus bedizened, hope to secure the affections of their lords. At Shief, the men would not allow my wife to approach or hold any intercourse with the Arab women, using opprobrious epithets when she tried to make friendly overtures, with the quaint result that whenever Mrs. Bent advanced toward a group of gazing females they fled precipitately, like a flock of sheep before a collie dog. These women wear their dresses high in front, showing their yellow legs above the knee, and long behind; they are of deep-blue cotton, decorated with fine embroidery and patches of yellow and red sewn on in pattern.

It is the universal female dress in Hadramut, and looks as if the fashion had not changed since the days when Hazarmaveth the patriarch settled in this valley and gave it his name. (Gen. x. 26.) The tall, tapering straw hat worn by these women when in the fields contributes with the mask to make the Hadrami females as externally repulsive as the most jealous of husbands could desire.—*Nineteenth Century.*

IN his recollections of Disraeli Lord Dufferin used to relate a characteristic story of the novelist. Meeting Disraeli as he was strolling up hatless from the House of Commons to speak to some colleague in the House of Lords, Lord Dufferin inquired of him if he had read a certain novel, and received the answer, "Oh, I have no time for novel-reading now. Moreover, when I want to read a novel I write it."—*New York World.*

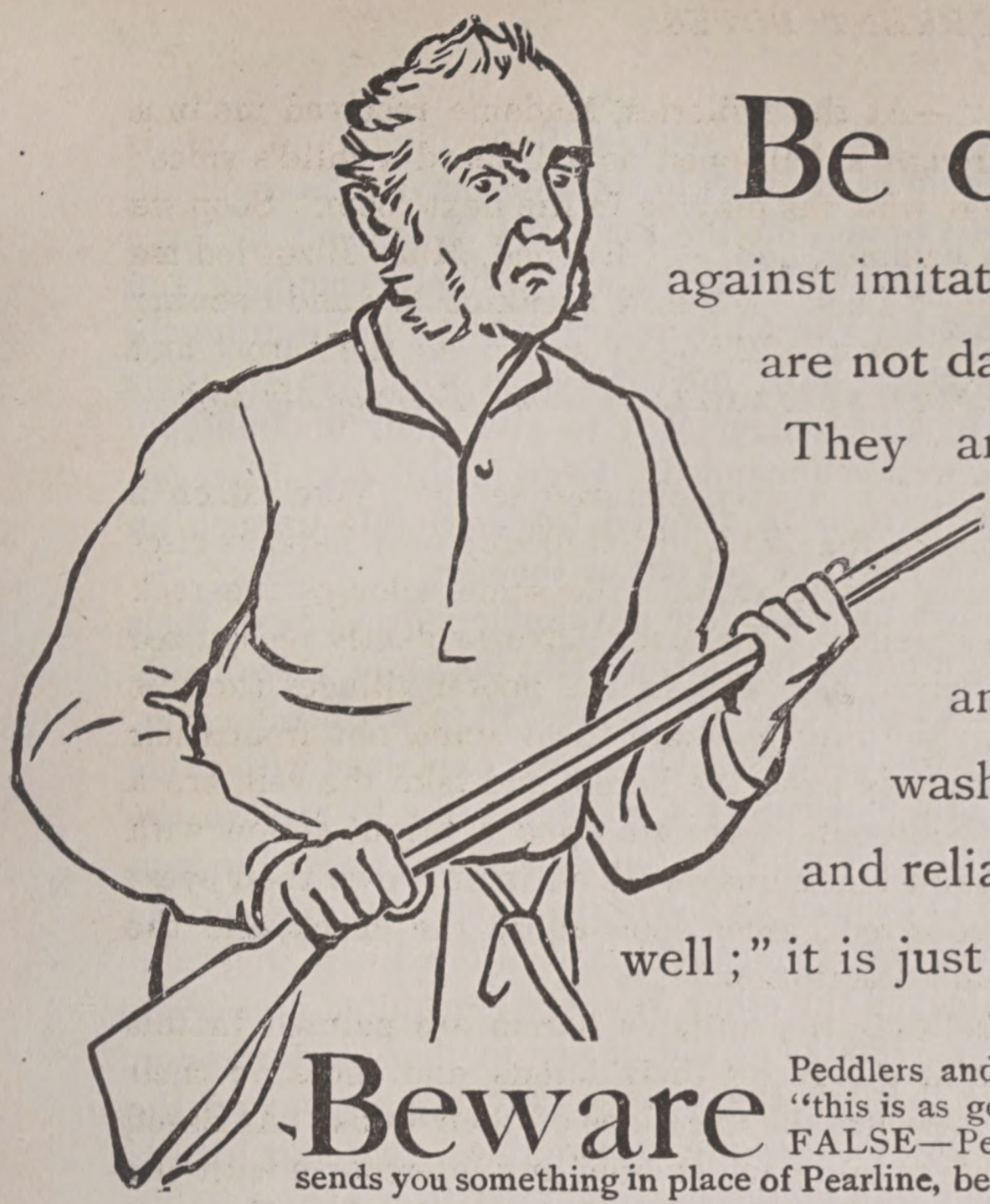
SHE HAD.—Hearing a faint rustle in the darkened hall-way below, the elder sister, supposing the young man had gone, leaned over the balustrade and called out,—

"Well, Bessie, have you landed him?"

There was a deep, sepulchral silence for some moments.

It was broken by the hesitating, constrained voice of the young man:

"She has."—*Chicago Tribune.*



Be on Guard

against imitations of *Pearline*. When they are not dangerous, they are worthless. They are usually both. *Pearline* does what nothing else can. It saves labor in washing, and insures safety to what is washed. It is cheap, thorough and reliable. Nothing else will "do as well;" it is just as well to have nothing else.

Beware Peddlers and some unscrupulous grocers will tell you "this is as good as" or "the same as Pearline." IT'S FALSE—Pearline is never peddled, and if your grocer sends you something in place of Pearline, be honest–*send it back*. 264 JAMES PYLE, N. Y.

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Safe Investments. Low Rate of Mortality. Low Expense Rate.

Unsurpassed in everything which makes Life Insurance reliable and moderate in cost.

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A VALUABLE ADDITION to the culinary list is Borden's Peerless Brand Evaporated Cream, an absolutely pure, unsweetened condensed milk so carefully prepared that it keeps indefinitely and is always available for every recipe calling for milk or cream.

A Gun, Chow-Chow, and Pickles.—The truth is, that if the Japanese do not sweep the Chinese from the sea, then study, skill, devotion, and experience go for nothing, and there is no need for us to train our naval officers at all. One thing only could save the Chinese on the sea,—the enlistment by large promises of money of European naval officers, in whose hands complete and unfettered control should be placed. The Chinese seamen are not wanting in courage, but, naturally enough, they have no confidence whatever in their leaders, and they would probably fight well enough to give their undoubtedly fine ships a chance if they were well commanded. Even in this case, however, the fear would be that the ships have been allowed to deteriorate to such an extent that nothing like their best could be got out of them.

I remember once being shown by a Chinese naval officer over one of their biggest iron-clads, which was on a cruise at the time, and therefore presumably in first-rate condition. I noticed a gun carefully protected in a canvas cover. As we passed it, I asked casually what it was. The officer explained with pride that it was a new quick-firing gun, and called a quartermaster to remove the covering. The order was obeyed with evident reluctance, and when the gun was at length exposed it proved to be used by one of the watches as a receptacle for their "chow," and was filled with chopsticks and littered with rice and pickles. Of course I promptly looked the other way, but it required no knowledge of Chinese to interpret the remarks of the officer to the quartermaster. No doubt the whole watch went through the process of "eating bamboo" the moment I was off the ship; but the Chinese are incorrigible. It would be discouraging to a European engineer who should be appointed to a Chinese ship to find that if there were any subordinate boiler small enough for the purpose it had probably been used for stewing dog.—*Contemporary Review.*

The Duke of Wellington and Waterloo.—Not long before his death, in 1867, Sir James South told me the following:

"Lord Ashley, after visiting at Strathfieldsaye, dined with me at the Observatory here; he alluded to conversations with the duke: one was, the Duke of Wellington said the opposed generals were clever men, Soult especially.

"'But how was it, sir, you always had the better of them?' asked Lord Ashley. 'Why, I blundered as well as they, but my men got me out of scrapes, theirs left them in,' was the reply."—*Notes and Queries.*

The Grand Sinyor and the Orgon, 1560.—All being quiett and no noyes at all, the presente began to salute the Grand Sinyor; for when I lefte it I did alow a quarter of an houre for his cominge thether. Firste the clocke strouke 22; than The chime of 16 bels went of, and played a songe of 4 partes. That beinge done, tow personagis which stood up to corners of the seconde storie, houldinge tow silver trumpetes in there handes, did lifte them to theire heades, and sounded a tantarra.

Then the muzicke went of, and the orgon played a song of 5 partes twyse over. In the tope of the orgon, being 16 foute hie, did stande a holly bushe full of blacke birds, and thrushis, which at the end of the musick did singe and shake theire wynges. Divers other motions thare was which the Grand Sinyor wondered at. Than the Grand Sinyor asked the Coppagawe [gatekeeper] yf it would ever doo the lyke againe. He answered that it would doo the lyke againe at the next houre.—*Early Voyages in the Levant.*

DR. W. H. DEPUY, A.M., D. D., LLD., Asst. Editor *Christian Advocate*, writes:

"New York, Dec. 20, 1893.

"Myself and family have derived so much benefit from the Electropoise and I have become so thoroughly convinced of its merits as a practical curative agent, that I feel warranted in commending it to the public."

Often Cures Chronic Cases *pronounced* Incurable

PROF. TOTTEN, of Yale College, in his book "Our Race," writes:

"But thanks be to God, there is a remedy for such as be sick—one single, simple remedy—an instrument called the Electropoise. We do not personally know the parties who control this instrument, but we do know of its value."

THE *Electropoise*

TRADE MARK.

THE whole system is revitalized by the oxygen taken into the blood as a result of polar attraction produced on the surfaces by its application; this general distribution of vitality through the skin avoids the necessity of imposing the burden of cure on any one organ, and explains why it is often possible for the Electropoise to effect cures where other remedies fail. Write for descriptive book.

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AN ASTHMA CURE AT LAST.—European physicians and medical journals report a positive cure for Asthma, in the Kola plant found on the Congo River, West Africa. The Kola Importing Co., 1164 Broadway, New York, are sending free trial cases of the Kola Compound by mail to all sufferers from Asthma who send name and address on a postal card. A trial costs you nothing.

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CRYSTAL PEPSIN TABLETS are nature's only cure for dyspepsia and indigestion. They prevent dulness after eating, and induce a refreshed feeling of renewed energy. Delivered by mail to any post-office in the United States on receipt of fifty cents in stamps. Samples mailed free. Address the CARL L. JENSEN COMPANY, 400 N. Third Street, Philadelphia, Pa. For sale at all druggists'.

Icarus.

What a spreading of fluttering wings!
  What chirpings, what pride in their child!
As, forgetting terrestrial things,
  The parents for gladness grow wild.

'Tis a lesson in flight they essay,
  As, led by the teachings of love,
The feeble wings flutter away,
  The weak limbs endeavor to move.

Now before and above him they dart,
  With short flights and encouraging calls,
  Now the poor pupil harmlessly falls,
Engrossed in his partly learnt art.

And the neighbors and gossips, who sit
  On the twigs of the bushes around,
Join the clamorous chorus and flit
  Up and down 'twixt their seats and the ground.

Long lasted the lesson. At length
  Those feeble wings tempted the air,
Full a yard, in their newly-found strength!
  You had thought they had Icarus there!

Such chirpings, such shouts of applause!
  Such a chorus of innocent glee!
  Unconscious that under the tree
Crept a monster with pitiless jaws.

Lewis Morris: *Songs without Notes.*

Poems in Prose—The Artist.—One evening there came into his soul the desire to fashion an image of "the pleasure that abideth for a moment." And he went forth into the world to look for bronze. For he could only think of bronze.

But all the bronze of the whole world had disappeared, nor anywhere in the whole world was there any bronze to be found, save only the bronze of the image of the sorrow that endureth forever.

Now this image he had himself and with his own hands fashioned, and had set it on the tomb of the one thing he had loved in life. On the tomb of the dead thing he had most loved had he set this image of his own fashioning, that it might serve as a sign of the love of man that dieth not, and a symbol of the sorrow of man that endureth forever. And in the whole world there was no other bronze save the bronze of this image.

And he took the image he had fashioned, and set it in a great furnace, and gave it to the fire.

And out of the bronze of the image of the sorrow that endureth forever he fashioned an image of the pleasure that abideth for a moment.—Oscar Wilde, in *Fortnightly Review*.

TEN REASONS FOR USING
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THE REASON WHY it is **best** from a sanitary point of view, is because of its absolute purity.

" " " it is unscented, is because nothing is used in its manufacture that must be hidden or disguised.

" " " it is cheapest to use, is because it is harder and dryer than ordinary soap, and does not waste away; also because it is not filled with rosin and clay as make-weights.

" " " no boiling of clothes is needed, is because there is no adulteration in it—being absolutely pure, it can do its own work.

" " " it leaves clothes washed with it whiter and sweeter than any other soap, is because it contains no adulteration to yellow them.

" " " it washes flannels without shrinking, bringing them out soft, white, and fleecy, is because it is free from rosin, which hardens, yellows, and mats together all woollen fibres, making them harsh and coarse.

" " " three bars of it will make a gallon of elegant white soft-soap if simply shaved up and thoroughly dissolved by boiling in a gallon of water, is that it contains pure and costly ingredients found in no other soap.

" " " it won't injure the finest lace or the most delicate fabric, is that all these ingredients are harmless.

" " " we paid $50,000 for the formula twenty-five years ago, is that we knew there was no other soap like it.

" " " so many millions of women use it, is that they have found it to be the best and most economical, and absolutely unchanging in quality,

ASK YOUR GROCER FOR IT. **DOBBINS SOAP MFG. CO.**
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Send your full name and address to Dobbins Soap Manufacturing Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, by return mail, and get, *free of all cost*, a coupon worth several dollars, if used by you to its full advantage. Don't delay. This is worthy attention. Mention *Lippincott's Magazine.*

CONSUMPTION CURED.—An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma, and all Throat and Lung Affections, also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge, to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French, or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this magazine, W. A. NOYES, 820 Powers' Block, Rochester, N.Y.

THE INFLUENCE OF COLOR ON DISEASES.—Experiments have been tried with a view to ascertain if color has an effect on certain forms of disease. In making this test a number of small-pox patients were placed in a room to which only red light was admitted. The patients were for the most part those suffering from unusually severe attacks, about half of them being unvaccinated children. In spite of the violent form of the malady, they all made speedy and safe recoveries, with very little fever and but few scars. There has been but little enthusiasm about colored glass since the famous blue glass excitement of some years ago. But that certainly did benefit certain cases, and at intervals ever since there have been revivals of interest in the subject.—*New York Ledger.*

A Cow's Queer Appetite.—One of the pedigree Holstein cows owned by Professor Arnold of Lincoln died, and when an examination was made a glove-buttoner was found embedded in one lung, while the stomach and intestines contained no less than forty-six articles, including a gold ring, another glove-buttoner, pieces of wire and crockery, nails, and an inch staple.

"With a Rumbelow."—Of the many quaint and picturesque survivals of old English customs, surely one of the oddest and most delightfully suggestive is the engrossment and presentation on the 9th day of November every year, at Southampton, of gravely-worded certificates vouching for the fact that no carracks of Genoa or galleys of Venice have arrived at the port. Poetry is not to be looked for in official documents, but if this voucher be read between the lines, is it not veritably a three-centuried sea-song of the freshest and breeziest, full of the brilliant color and strange circumstance of old-world shipping?

For it's yo-heave-ho,
With a rumbelow,
And the merchants pace the shore,
But the Genoese wagons and galleys of Venice
Surge in from the sea no more, no more,—
Sweep in from the sea no more.

And whiffs of spice
From the Paradise
Where the nutmeg and cinnamon grow
No more float down
To the dull sea-town
To the music of yo-heave-ho!

For it's yo-heave-ho,
With a rumbelow,
And the merchants pace the shore,
But the Genoese wagons, etc., etc.

Good Words.

A Lawyer's Satire.—Lord Chancellor Eldon pronounced the word "lien" as if written lion. Sir Arthur Pigott, a distinguished chancery lawyer, maintained that "lien" was to be pronounced like lean, and one day each made a stand in court for his favorite pronunciation, whereupon Jekyll, a witty lawyer, perpetrated this rhyming pun, which alludes to the parsimonious arrangements of the chancellor's kitchen:

Sir Arthur, Sir Arthur, why, what do you mean
By saying the chancellor's lion is lean?
D'ye think that his kitchen's so bad as all that,
That nothing within it can ever get fat?

San Francisco Argonaut.

Explained.—An old Scotch lady who had no relish for modern church music was expressing her dislike to the singing of an anthem in her own church one day, when a neighbor said, "Why, that is a very old anthem! David sang that anthem to Saul." To this the old lady replied, "Weel, weel! I noo for the first time understan' why Saul threw his javelin at David when the lad sang for him."—*Presbyterian.*

The February Number

OF

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MAGAZINE,

READY JANUARY 20,

WILL CONTAIN A COMPLETE NOVEL
ENTITLED

The Chapel of Ease,

BY

HARRIET R. DAVIS,

Author of "Gilbert Elgar's Son," etc.

Also, the Usual Variety of Stories, Essays, Poems, etc.

For List of Complete Novels contained in Former Numbers, see Next Page.

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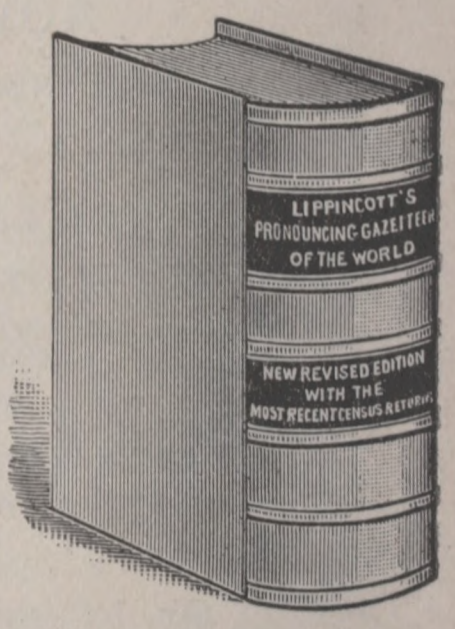
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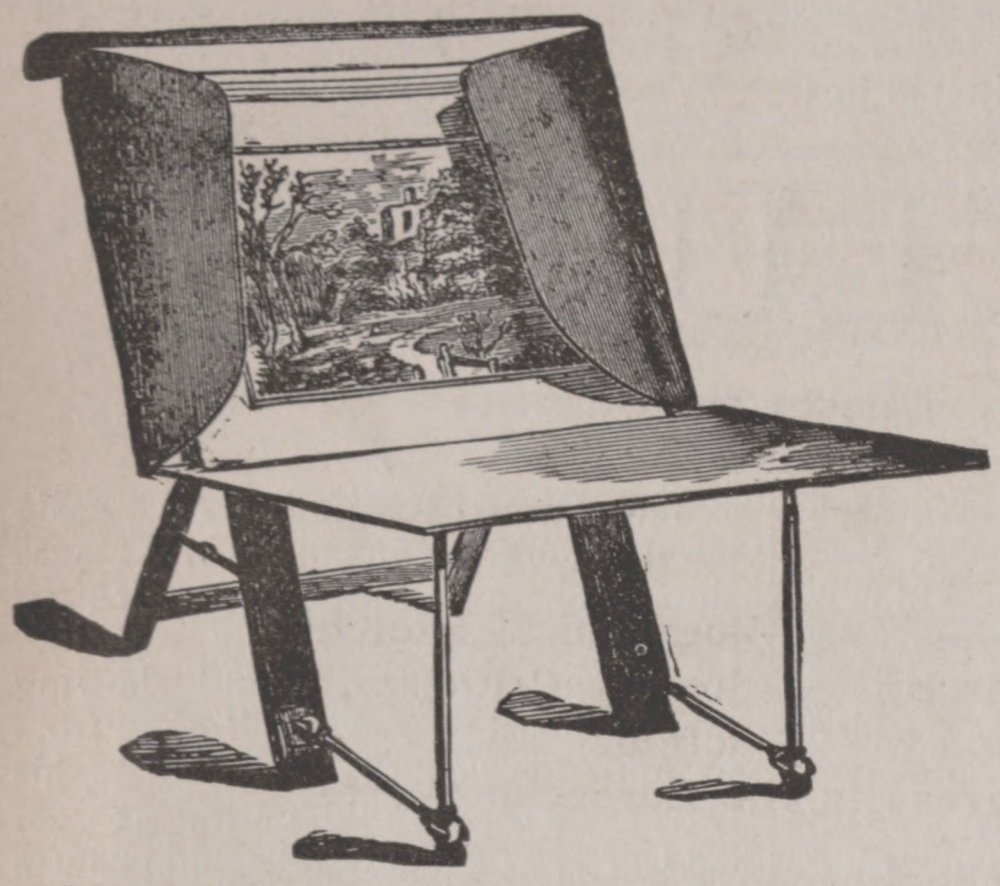
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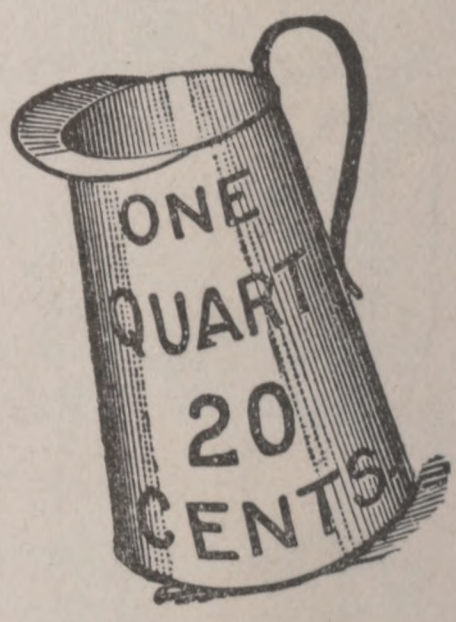
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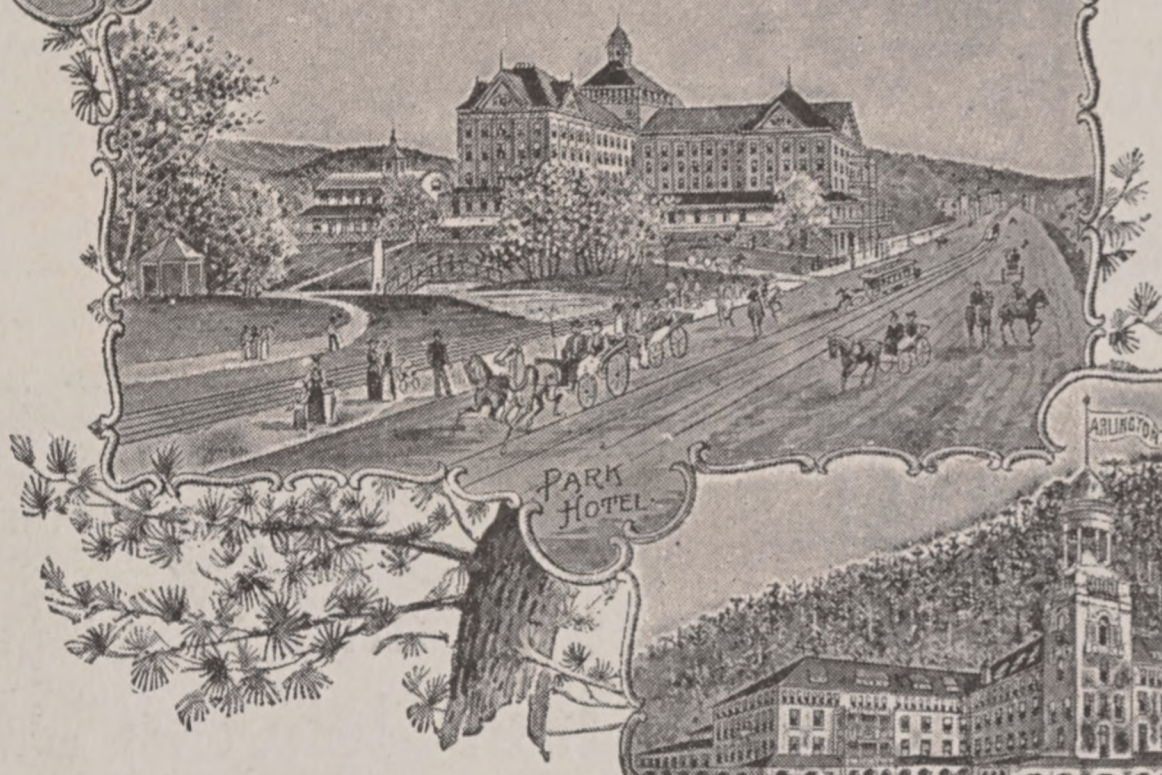
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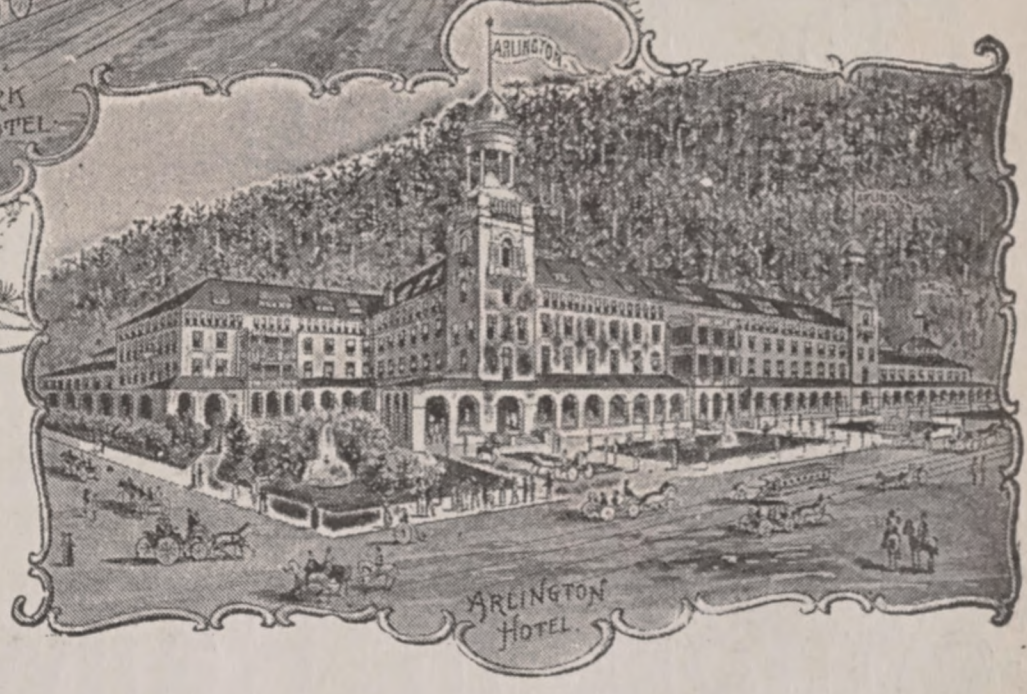
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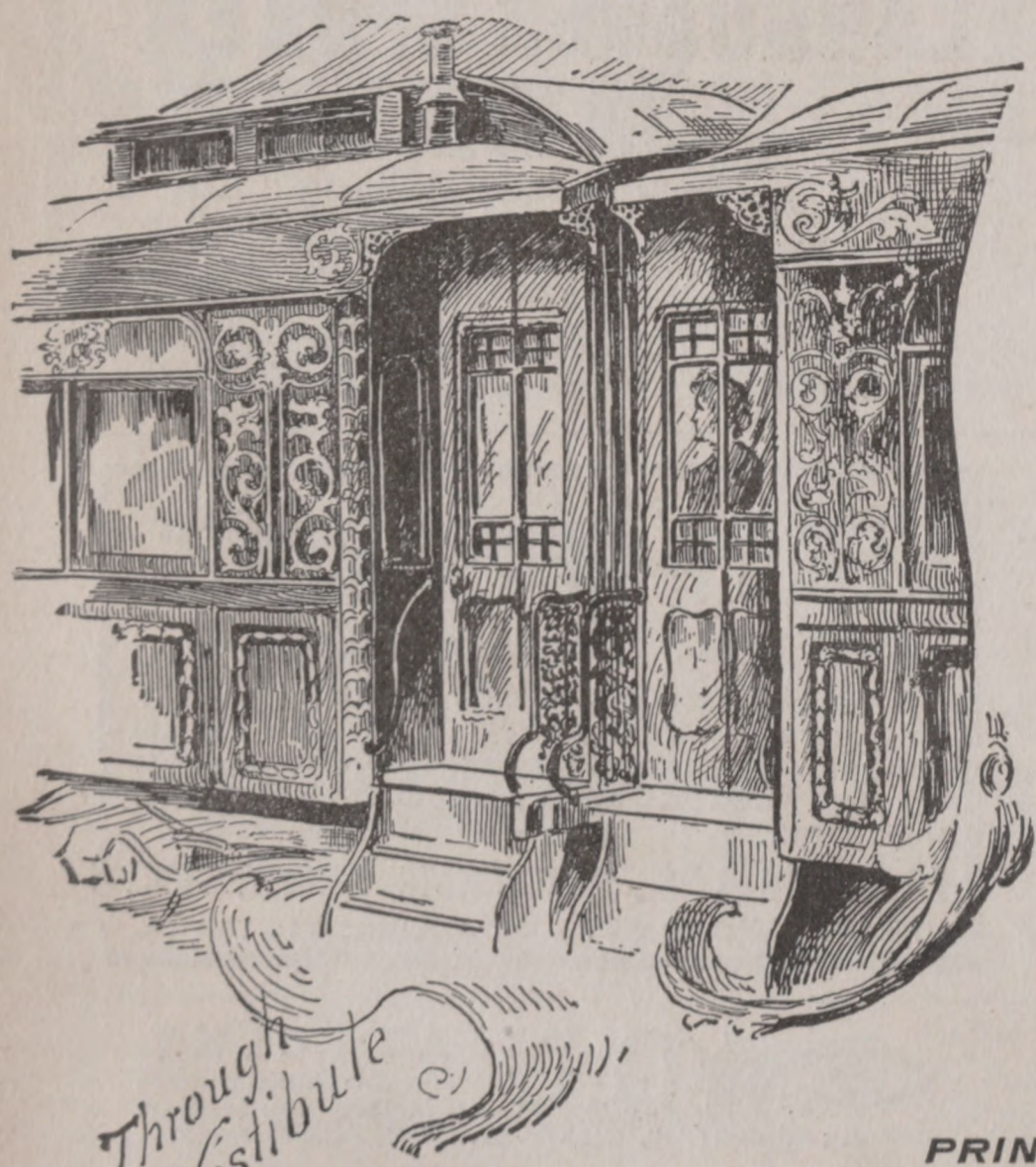
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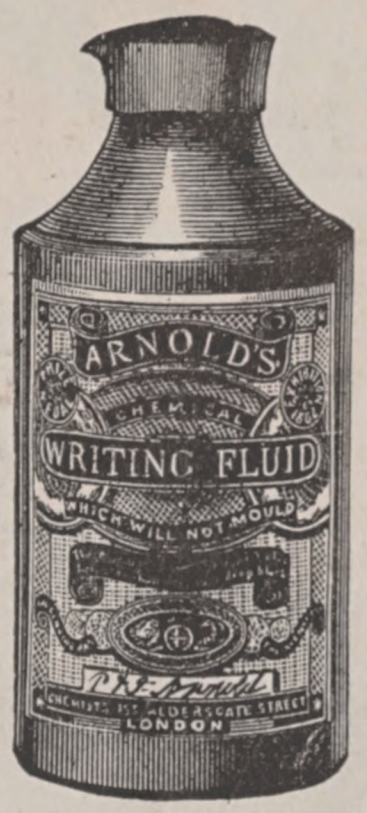
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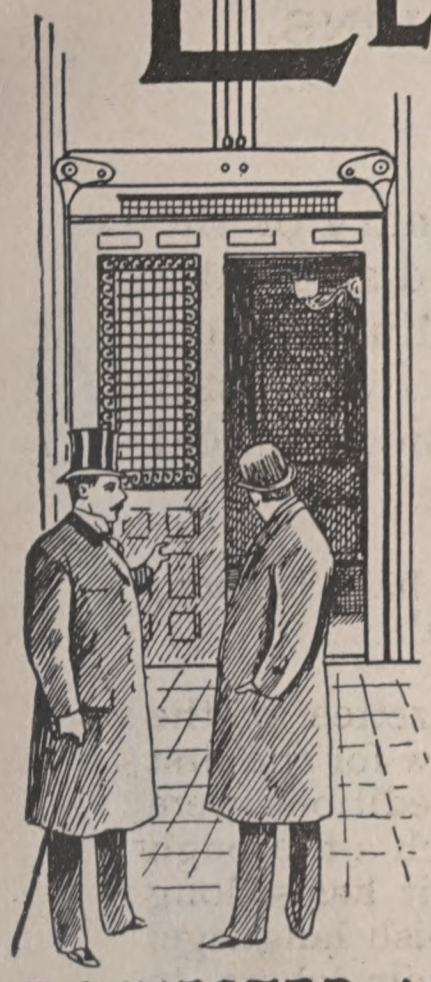
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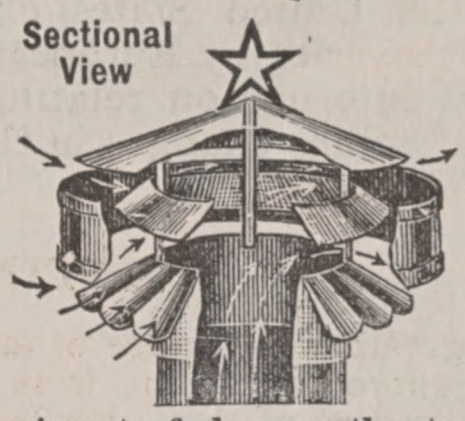
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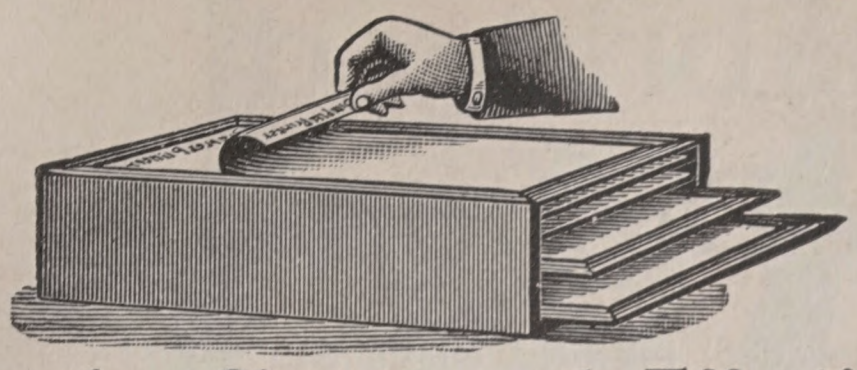


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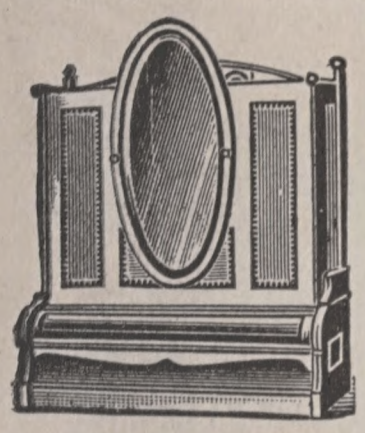


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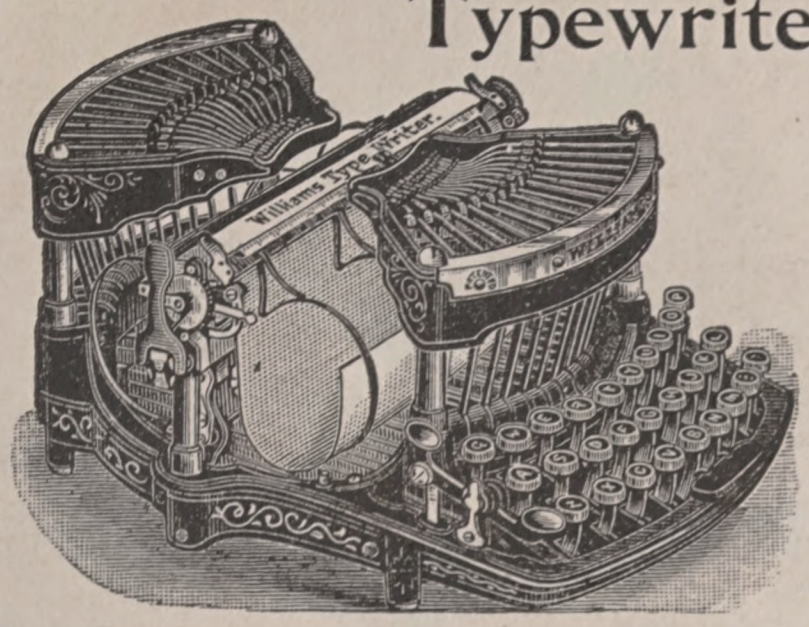
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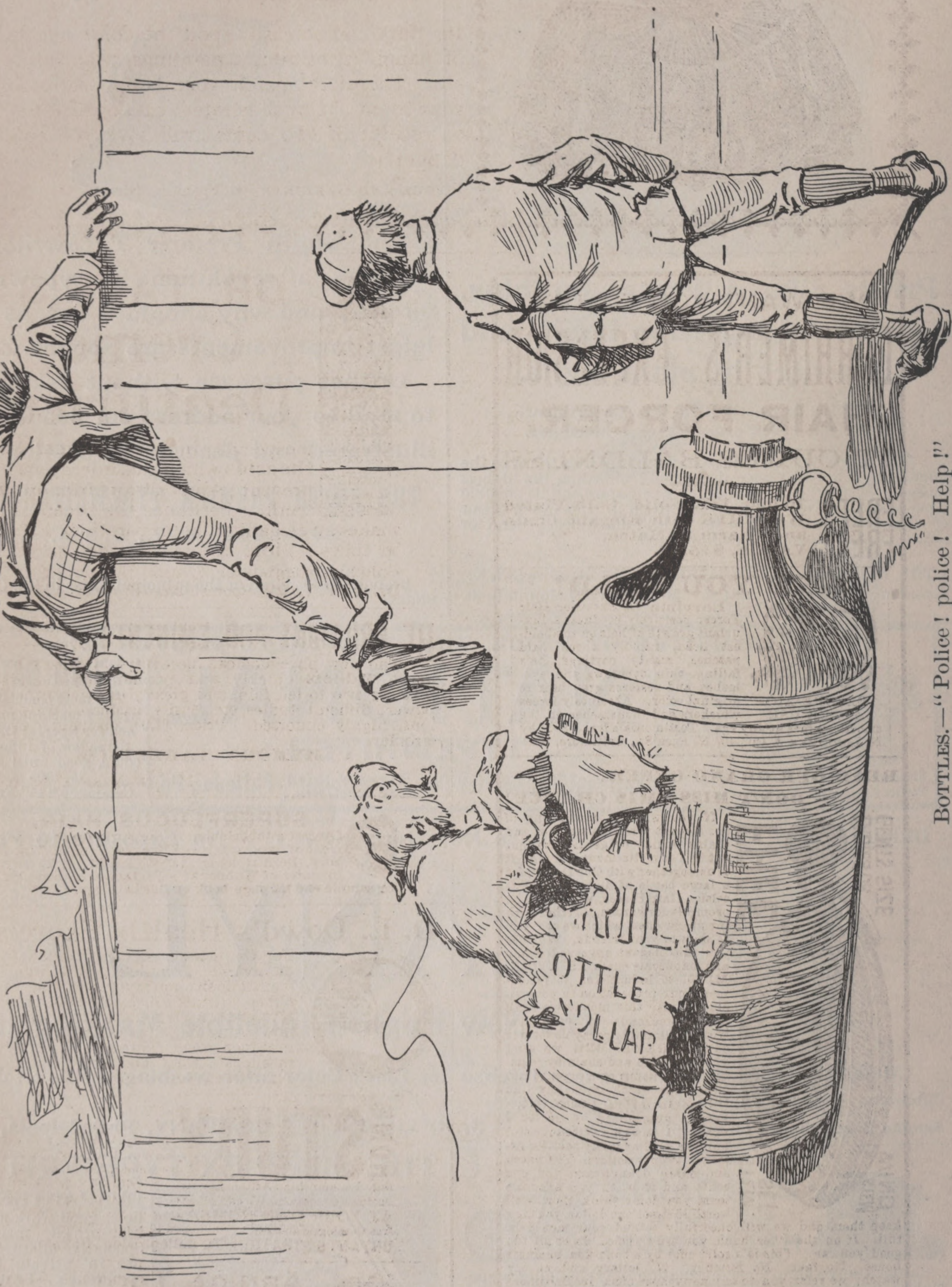
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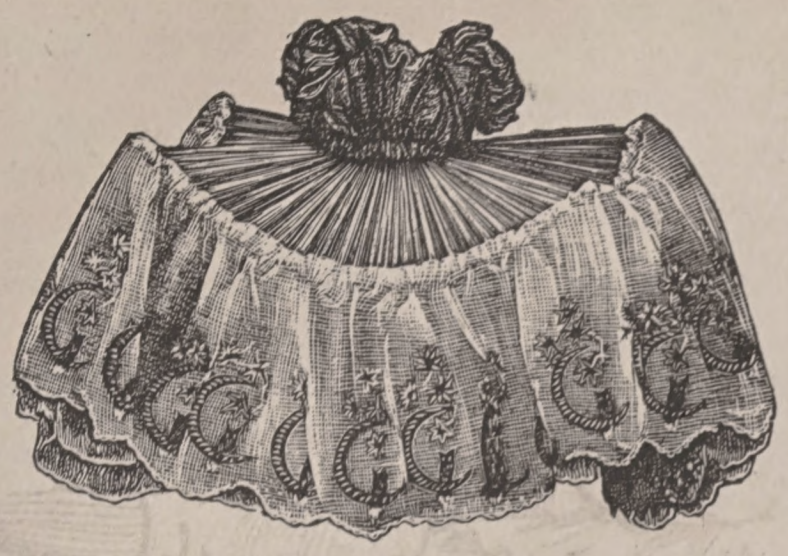
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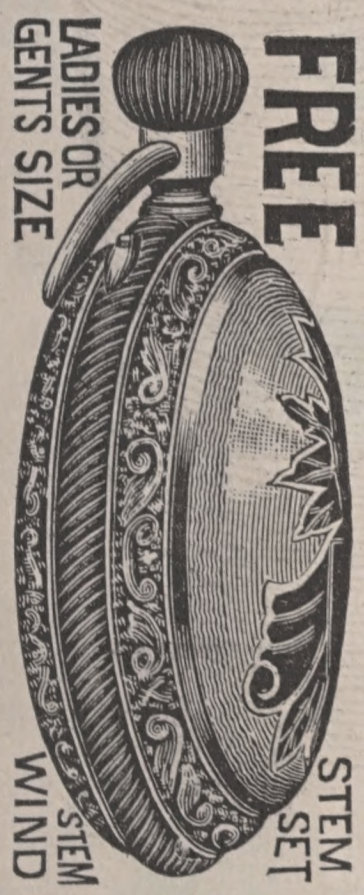


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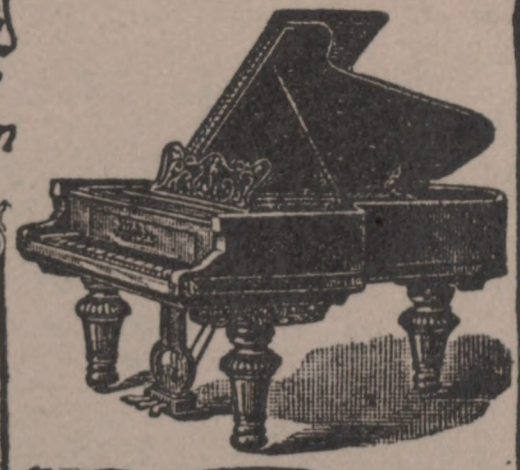


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